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PLATO'S REPUBLIC AND SWISS DEMOCRACY

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INTRODUCTION

Plato's Republic is one of the earliest textbooks on government which is still widely read and studied and whose application to modern life is still considered. Swiss democracy, on the other hand, is the oldest form of contemporary democracy.

To confront Swiss democracy with Plato's opinions about government, as found in his Republic, has the purpose of clarifying our modern concept of democracy. Similar comparisons have been made with other countries. The interest in a comparison with Switzerland, however, lies in the fact that although Swiss thought, as it can be traced through the centuries, has an idealistic character, its Christian idealism is somewhat different from Plato's pre-Christian idealism. Moreover, while there is some similarity between the two with regard to the philosophical basis of thought, we are struck by the fact that, as to political standpoint, Switzerland is democratic while Plato was an aristocrat.

How it is possible to be an idealist as well as a democrat, is a question which goes far beyond a merely theoretical treatise. There are many noble people today for whom the reading of Plato has more than literary value; they sym-

pathize with the ancient philosopher and fortify their own position in taking refuge behind a famous authority.[1] The similarity between modern circumstances and the conditions under which Plato lived makes it easy to carry Plato's viewpoint over into modern life, if we disregard those circumstances in which Greece in the third and fourth centuries B.C. differs from our time. Idealists who, disgusted with low standards of culture under a democratic order, seek comradeship among their own kind and sponsor an aristocratic political order, may well be reminded that in his political aspirations Plato failed. On the other hand, Switzerland, whose beginning goes back to the thirteenth century, has built up a democratic structure which even under the stress of this war has not sacrificed essential characteristics.

What is it that enables Switzerland to hold out against totalitarian aggression? We can explain it on a purely material basis, but such an answer may not satisfy many deep-thinking persons. Such people can only be satisfied by an analysis of Swiss thought on one side and of the mental attitude of the enemy on the other. In working out an analysis of Swiss thought, this writer has been struck by the similarity between the genesis of Switzerland and that of the United States of America, although great differences in size, geographical position and age exist between the two countries

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[1] Beside Plato's political dialogues Aristotle's Politics is important in this respect.

today. Therefore the present study should be of more than objective interest to the American.

Both countries have emerged from being part of an empire, have amalgamated with other cultures, and finally found their modern political form in a federation of the originally independent states. Just as the hard life of a mountain peasant gave the early Swiss the moral strength to resist the feudalistic plans of the Hapsburg dynasty, so the perilous life of the American frontier[2] created an independence of thought which made supervision by the London government superfluous. But these phenomena again are but effects of something much deeper guiding the people of Switzerland and America: their religious reverence. It is the urge of freedom to act according to conscience for which the Swiss have fought in past centuries and are prepared to fight today. It is a sincere religious reverence and concepts based on a knowledge of the Bible, which gave the Americans a direction that did not depend on a government in London. It was this which enabled the Americans to perceive the spiritual character of man as God's image and likeness, and to see that therefore all men should have equal political rights.

Although the Swiss do not have such a clearly formulated declaration of the rights of man as do the Americans, the same kind of thinking has characterized them, too. It is

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2. Adams, EA. Adams stresses the importance of the American frontier in the emancipation of the United States.

this urge to act according to conscience and to resist whatever endangers this freedom, that made the early Swiss take their stand against the aggressive forms of feudalism in its later period as established in German lands in the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. As a part of the Holy Roman Empire the Swiss Confederacy became more and more a political structure within the Empire, until in 1501, after a successful war against the German Emperor Maximilian I, Swiss independence had to be granted, although official recognition was given only in 1648 at the Peace of Westphalia.

As that war represented a liberation from the secular overlord of Christianity, the Swiss Reformation as initiated by Zwingli was but a further step in the same direction: the liberation from the spiritual overlord of Christianity. In this move not all the members of the Swiss Confederacy followed. Most of the mountain cantons remained Catholic, and this split the Confederacy into two parts. Nevertheless the more important members changed to the new faith, and since the Reformation Switzerland has also grown to a cultural importance of her own. The Swiss Reformation stood on its own feet, being little influenced by Luther. It was under Swiss protection and influence that Calvin unfolded his activity which was to be of such far-reaching consequences in the British Isles and in America. It is this religious relation between Switzerland and the United States which explains in part the many similarities in the political

development of the two countries, and it is this Protestant ethics based on the Bible which furnishes the safe foundation of modern democracy. The Bible gives us an understanding of the spiritual nature of man and Christian democracy is founded on this spiritual concept of man. It is the leading idea, the limit of our political activity and therefore it can never be completely realized in matter; it can only be infinitely approached.

A totalitarian standpoint must necessarily ridicule such a democratic point of view. Judging man according to blood and soil necessarily excludes the basis of democratic thought. To this mentality there are better and worse people, people ready for leadership and others to be led, Herrenvolk and slaves, and the authority of Aristotle may be very useful to justify this standpoint.[3]

Even Plato is not on the democratic side. Having come himself of an aristocratic Athenian family, it would have been necessary for him to be freed of party prejudices in order to pass favorable judgment on the democratic periods of his home city. The deep impression made on him by the highly ethical personality of Socrates, and his own high birth produced the essential factors of his thought and action. Political disappointment in his earlier years over the democratic period of Athens, as well as the misrule of the Thirty, the aristocrats, caused him to refrain from an active political career.

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[3] Aristotle, Pol., 1252a, 1254a-1255a.

The worthy thing for him to do seemed to be to work out in theory a political structure which would be the application of his philosophy of ideas.

As an idealist interested to see his theories work, he made his travels to Sicily, but all his efforts ended in failure. Already in theory, in his Republic, Plato proposes an unusual mode of living for the ruling class in order to ensure their reliability. His practical plans for establishing his theories in Syracuse deviated still more from his highly ethical leading idea.

The democracy of Athens is not the democracy we are fighting for today. If a democracy is not founded on an understanding of the spiritual concept of man it is a form of government hard to defend. A democracy which only fights for liberté, egalité, fraternité, merely humanitarian ideals, is not strong enough against an assault by military states such as those of Sparta or Nazi Germany, who regard such ideals as weakness. The fall of France is a much greater calamity than it appears on the surface to be. It has many parallels to the fall of Athens. There is an enormous difference whether a political structure rests on a religious idea - on a feeling of responsibility towards a higher power - or on a basis of self-seeking, with each one clamoring for and trying to defend his personal advantages.

If Plato shook his head over such a democracy, we can very well understand him. And if today a noble character

takes a negative stand against a merely material, democratic concept, we can understand him, too. Our western culture is to a large extent based on two foundations: Greek culture, and the Christian religion.[4]

Greek culture reaches its ethical height in Plato's theory of ideas, culminating in an idea of good, pure reason, an impersonal monotheism. This idealism is a philosophic belief, a theory, in which alone Plato finds a reasonable explanation of the universe. In realizing the limitation of his own reasoning, Plato conceived an unlimited reason, a god, as the creator of the universe. In order to make this standpoint sharp we may express it in a biblical paraphrase: "God made in the image and likeness of man."

The Jewish-Christian concept of God is something outside the human capacity of reasoning. It declares man to be the image and likeness of God, and it is through the Gospel of Christ that St. Augustine sees the possibility of finding a bridge between the Bible and Platonic idealism.[5] But instead of reasoning up from man to God, he reasons down from God to man, and his religious experience gives him the justification for taking this standpoint in solving the philosophic problem.

In part unconsciously, and in part through acquaintance, St. Augustine's standpoint has entered Protestant thought. In Switzerland under the leadership of the humanist Zwingli

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[4] Meiklejohn, WAM.

[5] St. Augustine, Conf., VII 20.

subordination of the political life of the country to divine direction was also proclaimed. In Switzerland the State is not a kind of religion beside the Christian religion. It represents the guardianship for religious life, the human justice necessary to maintain law and order, but it is meant to be inferior to the divine or absolute justice, as expressed in Zwingli's sermon, On Divine and Human Justice.[6] The Swiss flag, white cross on a red field, is a symbol of this thinking.

How does this kind of thought affect the modern political life of Switzerland? It would be foolish to think that all Swiss politicians are saints, or even that they recognize the religious basis of their country. But this does not mean that the religious-political trend has been lost since Zwingli's death. A distinct dislike of too much personal leadership and the slow growth of the political structure of Switzerland have solidly established the country. The common Swiss desire for freedom, a freedom to act according to conscience, has led the Swiss people like a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night through their history, and in times of outspoken materialism, as at the end of the fifteenth century as well as in recent decades, it has helped them to find their way back to their original course.

Viewing modern Swiss political life, one may well ask, what is its relation to Plato's claim that the best men should govern the state. First of all, how is a reliable aristocracy

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[6] Zwingli, gmG.

of the best men to be constituted? Neither birth, money nor any other material criterion can solve the problem. Complete equality of rights in relation to the state, in other words democracy, seems to be the basis for the selection of suitable leaders. While Switzerland has in her development reached the point where elections are carried through satisfactorily on this basis, it is a matter of further growth for a stronger government to be attained on this basis through electing more outstanding men. It is the weak governments of the democracies which the totalitarian countries criticize, and in times such as ours it is certainly important for democracies to be as quick and efficient in action as the dictatorships. But how to attain this?

Here we leave the degree of perfection which Swiss democracy has already acquired and look to the ultimate ideal. The ideal is for unity to become so firmly established that swift and efficient action is as possible to a democracy as to a dictatorship, while avoiding the risks of personal leadership and an autocratic regime. Even now the highest executive of the Swiss Confederation much more resembles the board of directors of a firm than a cabinet in a parliamentary system, and therefore its continuity is much more secure. The more completely this council becomes a body of representatives of the people who really understand the needs of the country, so that it can be considered as a nucleus of the nation,[7] the more

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[7] Hebler, EPF, 122.

nearly are the highest possible type of government approached and the requirements of a modern state met. When a sense of responsibility to Deity is added, resulting in competent and forceful use of the powers conferred on the government by the people, nothing remains which would make any aristocratic or dictatorial form of government preferable to a democracy.

Plato's Republic is a treatise on the highest type of government which he could imagine. As material for his research he had only Greek society, and in metaphysics he was a pioneer. We cannot do justice to the Republic unless we look upon it as a pioneer's work which for two milleniums has been a counterbalance to more restricted concepts of the Christian religion. But we can hardly expect a man who lived more than two thousand years ago to provide the solution of a world crisis for which Plato surely did not have the richness of experience which we have today. Furthermore, it is the opinion of this writer that without a Christian standpoint, a standpoint based on the Bible, a solution does not exist. Plato lived several centuries before Jesus of Nazareth, and in consulting him we must take this into consideration.

But if we only exchange a Platonic philosophic belief for a Christian religious belief, we are not immune from justified attack against this standpoint. The defender of a Christian standpoint is not on safe ground as long as his Weltanschauung is based on mere faith. Today this Christian standpoint and its policy of democratic government is under

a most dangerous attack. Can mere faith give us sufficient conviction to keep us firm? If a Christian Weltanschauung is based on substance, then what the Christian hopes to be true must be proved to be true and faith has to grow to understanding of spiritual laws which must have been the basis of the action and sermons of the founder of Christianity. In other words, a personal worship of a savior has to grow to the understanding of the scientific nature of his teaching, and such a science of Christianity must be able to answer the questions which the natural sciences are obliged to leave unanswered. Unless a satisfactory philosophical answer can be given by such a science of Christianity, we are unable to defend such a statement as "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). And as a consequence our defense of the principle of democracy cannot have the necessary firmness.

Plato did not have this standpoint, because the founder of the Christian religion lived several centuries later than he. We must therefore admire him for having had as exalted a standpoint as he did, with only philosophic belief to base it on. His theory of ideas is highly instructive even today and helps us widen a religious personal worship by an impersonally conceived monotheism. But the stones which Plato had for building his Weltanschauung were gathered from his material experience, and his endeavor was to unite them into a structure which promised to give a reasonable explana-

tion of the constitution of the universe. He who gets closest to the constitutive principle of the universe will get the key position from which any phenomenon can be seen in its true nature and therefore can also judge rightly concerning governmental problems. But who was ready to follow Plato in such an endeavor? It was the noblest part of the nation, those who had been brought up in cultured milieux, in a word: the aristocrats. There are many people today who take the same view as Plato, and among them, too, are very nobly minded people. Like Plato, they may be repelled by unethical political practices, and it is not infrequently that such people sympathize with a totalitarian order.

To defend the democratic standpoint is not altogether attractice.[8] It needs a deeply rooted conviction of the rights of man which only a firmly established Christian conviction can give. It is true that democratic political life has its dark sides. But are the problems of the individual solved by forbidding him to make his claims? Better political conditions can come only if the billions of big and small mistakes and injustices in people's lives are corrected and thus eliminated, and only where man's individuality is not crushed is this possible. There are two ways of making order. One is to put all the dirty dishes into a cupboard, and this is the totalitarian way. The other is to bring them out and really do the necessary work to clean them, however distaste-

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[8] Ortega y Gasset, ROM.

ful it may be. This is the way of democracy.

Switzerland is privileged to look back on a history of almost seven centuries. Even if her democratic character was at times much covered over by undemocratic tendencies, an almost unbroken development has enabled her to acquire the stability for which she is envied today. The preservation of Switzerland is more than a happy coincidence for the Swiss. It means that the kind of government which is the hope of progressive mankind has not disappeared in this war. The Swiss have defended their country as a laboratory of democracy not only for themselves, but for the world.

This introduction has stated the scope of this thesis in its general lines and has mentioned the solutions in rather a dogmatic way. It is now the purpose of the following chapters to study the problems in detail and explain the reason for the conclusions already stated here.

CHAPTER I

HISTORIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF PLATO'S REPUBLIC

A favorite subject of investigation is the comparison of events of modern history with similar events of antiquity. Ancient history represents a concluded development. Even if we may have the impression of living in the late part of the period of Occidental culture, any systematic historical classification must be a conditional one, because this culture has not yet attained its conclusion and events of the future may greatly change preconceived views.

This is not the case with the history of antiquity. It is generally accepted that the end of the western Roman Empire can be considered as the end of that period and there is hardly any one who questions the justification of this incision. Speaking of the history of Greece and Rome we can distinguish an early, middle and late period and a comparison of such periods with what may appear to be an equivalent period in modern history can very often furnish instructive analogies. Knowing the end of a story, we have some grounds for predicting what will happen in the modern parallel.

Such comparisons, attractive as they may be, must be made with great care. Seeing analogies, we are only too likely to

draw premature conclusions and disregard factors which in the two periods are definitely dissimilar. It is very easy in reading Thucydides to read into the history of Sparta the role Germany is taking today, and to see in Athens the parallel of the modern democracies. Of course there are striking similarities, but let us not overlook the differences. We may read into Greek words a new meaning; for instance, the democracy we are fighting to uphold today is not the same democracy we find in Athens. Nor must we overlook the tremendous differences in scope of the ancient and modern conflict. A further close study of this comparison would show us a great many other factors which the inaccurate observer easily overlooks.

It is just this separating of the chaff from the wheat which makes such a comparison the more attractive, and if Plato swung the Damocles sword over Athenian democracy, it is important for the defender of our modern democracy to know whether one of the greatest philosophers of all times also disapproves what we stand for.

In order to simplify our study, we have chosen out of Plato and out of modern democracy the typical expression of the standpoint of each. For Plato it is his chief work, the Republic, in which he exposes his whole program without compromise, while we have already characterized Switzerland as the laboratory of democracy.

However, to do justice to the Republic and see it not

only in its theoretic value but as a practical political program as well, we must first study its background.

* * * * *

Let us first of all investigate the question, why we are so much interested in Greek culture and are anxious to compare institutions of our own time with those of the Greeks.

Our Western culture stands on two pillars. One is Greek culture, and the other is the Bible. Some readers may be offended that the Greek source of our culture is mentioned first. After all, the early reports of the Bible go back farther than the earliest knowledge we have of the Greeks. Speaking of European culture and its expansion across the seas, however, this is justified. When the Christian doctrine was first brought to the shores of Europe, Greek culture had already passed its peak and its influence was felt in all corners of the Roman Empire. Christianity spread in Europe at a time when Greece was a country held in bondage by the political ruler of the Mediterranean, and the vigor of its culture could only be found in looking back to its glorious period. Christianity brought something new to the western world, but being a newcomer it had to conform somewhat to the already existing culture which was based chiefly on the Greek pattern. The Greeks, and under their guidance the Romans, carried the Christian doctrine to the western world.[1]

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[1] Meiklejohn, WAM.

To assimilate Oriental culture to the needs of Europe is one of the great cultural achievements of the Greek nation. This was not only the case with the Christian doctrine. Much earlier the Greeks absorbed Egyptian and Oriental culture, as well as those of early Mediterranean peoples like the inhabitants of Crete. In absorbing such alien elements, they developed them into something new, so that their origin can hardly be recognized. The Greeks themselves thought that their cultural achievements had their foundation in their own country, but modern historians, having a longer perspective, trace Greek culture farther back. The Greeks of historic times who showed forth the first cultural achievements, were those of the west coast of Asia Minor, the Ionians, and there is little doubt today that it was Greek contact with the Orient which brought culture to the shores of Europe.

The Greeks themselves must have immigrated into the southwestern tip of the Balkan peninsula from the north and probably their original culture was not very high, since we still find in their mythology such primitive religious customs as human sacrifice. However the Greeks had an extraordinary capacity to assimilate alien culture and the high attainments of their classical period give proof of their outstanding artistic and intellectual capacity.

The Greeks are not only important to us as converters of Oriental culture. They also defended the European continent against the Asiatic invasion undertaken by the Persian kings

Darius and Xerxes. They enabled the Europeans to built up a culture of their own with its clear distinction from that of Asia.

The Persian War was not only a tremendous physical achievement of the small Greek nation, but it was also a moral achievement for the Greeks to be able to unite as one nation. It was a victory over an extreme particularism which at all times characterized Greek political life.

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This brings us to the internal political life of Greece. Just as in the early Swiss Confederacy each canton had its own political institutions and looked on citizens of other cantons as aliens, so in ancient Greece we find similar conditions. The early Greek immigrants probably had come to the country in separate small tribal units and founded their own political structures. The Polis, the city-state, seems to have been the usual political unit, and in early times each of these states was apparently governed by a king.

Among the Greek states Sparta was an exception. These Dorians of the Peloponnesus with their inferior standard of living in comparison to other parts of Greece, are connected with a later immigration of tribes which may originally have lived in the mountains of Albania. In the classical period when most Poleis had developed into democracies and one of them, Athens, had reached its outstanding position, Sparta

held to a belligerent and primitive tradition. The institutions of the Spartan state point to the probability that it was based on military conquest. The Spartans themselves were a small minority of a few thousand people within their state, whose position could only be maintained by a rigorous system of supervising their subjects and by constant vigilance. The great emphasis which they laid on physical fitness for war, ascetic living and strict supervision of the education of the younger generation as warriors was a strict necessity for the perpetuation of their state. Family life and private interests had to be subordinated to the predominance of the state, and it is only natural that under such conditions little attention could be given to culture. In the smallness of Lacedaemonian society, where individualism meant so little and the state meant everything, community living with its common meals was almost a natural consequence.

We cannot deny that today Nazi Germany shows a striking similarity to the Spartan state. In Germany, too, we have the emancipation of a comparatively small clique, the full-fledged Nazi circle, which aims to run Germany and the occupied countries for the benefit and maintenance of this circle. But although this circle tries to be preserved from the hardships of the conquered peoples, the abnormal conditions by which it maintains itself create abnormal consequences. The terroristic rule breaks up family ties. Every one has to conform to an official standard which goes against his natural feelings.

The son suspects his father to be a secret enemy of the state, and the father fears his son will betray him to the Gestapo, a police system similar to the Spartan system of the Ephores. Both are systems of terrorization and embody the power to sentence any person under suspicion without giving the accused an opportunity for proper defense. The supervision of the education of the young generation is a further characteristic of this type of militaristic state. And even the Spartan iron money, intended to prevent easy communication with those abroad, has its modern parallel in German economic isolation and the artificial currency with no real substance back of it.

A militaristic state such as that of Sparta, neglecting cultural and social life in favor of developing and maintaining the utmost military capacity, rendered an excellent service to the whole Hellenic nation as long as the Persian Empire was a threat. But on the other hand the Lacedaemonians themselves constituted a menace to the other Greek states.

While states like Corinth entered into a league with Sparta, Athens remained apart, having built up a federation under her leadership, and after the Persian Wars reached the highest peak of her culture. To her position the Spartan military preponderance was a constant threat. In Athens not only the arms, but also the mind, was cultivated. Just as before World War I France, England and other countries could not feel secure as long as William II played with the thought of making use of the powerful German military machine, so

Athens lived under a constant threat and the tenseness of the atmosphere in both cases finally led to war.

* * * *

There are passages in Plato's Republic which remind us of Spartan institutions, but Plato being an Athenian, the basis of his observations must have been first of all those of his home city. If he approved some of the Spartan institutions, it was doubtless because in his own city he saw their unsatisfactory opposite. But before looking at Athens through Plato's eyes, let us get an independent grasp of the situation.

From modest beginnings Athens progressed through the centuries until it was one of the most important cities of ancient times. The legend of Theseus indicates that Athens in her early stages must have been a kingdom tributary to the early Cretan Empire. About the time of Solon, when Athens entered her historical period[2], we find the political leadership mainly in the hands of a wealthy landowning aristocracy, while the lower castes of the population, mostly composed of peasants, suffered economic strangulation. This was the situation Solon was called upon to remedy.[3] Being an aristocrat by birth, but a merchant by profession, and having his sym-

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2. 600 B.C.

3. 594 B. C.

pathies with the oppressed, he succeeded in freeing them from their debts, while the losing noble class was compensated by giving them political and military preferment. The early monarchistic structure of the Athenian state had given way to aristocracy and was on the way towards democracy. The development was not, however, a smooth one. In the fifth century Peisistratus had an opportunity to establish a tyranny whose after-effects were the immediate causes of the Persian War.[4]

With the Persian War[5] Athens entered her glorious period under the outstanding leaders Themistocles and Pericles. This was the great period of Athenian democracy.[6] Although Plato did not experience this period personally, it was recent past for him and we can well imagine that the criticism he makes in the eighth book of the Republic on the different types of constitutions is not only based on his own experience, but on reports of this earlier period as well.

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4. Hippias, Peisistratus' son, who had to flee from Athens, sought to encourage the King of Persia to make war on Greece and took part in Mardonius' campaign. There are other instances when for selfish reasons Greeks treacherously negotiated with the Persians against Greek states; e.g. in 411 B.C. Sparta signed an agreement with the Persian Satrap of Phrygia, directed against Athens.

5. The Persian War spread over the first part of the sixth century. The decisive battles were Marathon 490 B.C., Thermopylae and Salamis 480 B.C., and Plataea 479 B.C.

6. Athens' flourishing period was the time between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars and generally the dates 460-431 are given for this period.

As splendid as the culture of the Periclean time certainly was, all was not sunshine. There were also dark shadows. We cannot appreciate highly enough what the Greeks have done in a cultural way, but their political history, particularly from the Peloponnesian War on, is a tragedy. There not only was a regrettable number of feuds among the different states, in particular between Athens and Sparta, but the social life showed a decomposition of morals and principles that foreshadowed an early fall.

The Persian War had been a successful all-out effort. The urgency of the moment had made the citizens of the many city-states conscious of a national unity. But as soon as the greatest danger was over, the quarrels among the Greeks reappeared and the greatest conflict was the struggle for hegemony between Sparta and Athens. At the same time it was a struggle between aristocracy and democracy. Athens was a house divided against itself. Democracy had been a recent achievement of the city and there was grudging opposition on the part of the noble families, even though members of such families made great careers as democrates, as was the case with Pericles. The situation in this respect was not unlike that of France under the Third Republic with its strong monarchistic groups and its generals like Liautey, who were ready to give their services to their country while disliking the republic.

Such aristocratic groups in Athens of course found ample

evidence on which to base their poor opinion of the democratic administration, while aristocratic Sparta seemed to them ideal. We even find ruthless characters such as Alcibiades, who did not mind to bring his home city into serious danger in offering his services to Sparta, the enemy in the Peloponnesian War, and when he found it expedient, he changed back to Athens. We even find ostracized Athenian leaders offering their services to Hellas' arch-enemy, Persia, for matters of personal revenge.[4]

But the nobles were not alone in putting their personal interests before those of their city. The Athenian democracy was lacking in discipline and an easy-going people was easily influenced by speakers who calculated with the emotions of the masses. Plato himself gives us an analysis of the Athenian democracy in his Republic and comparison with other studies shows Plato's criticism is not too strong.[7]

An important factor in the disintegration of Athenian society was the vanishing faith in the traditional religion. We hear the expression Greek Enlightenment used with reference to the Sophists as a parallel to the modern period of Enlightenment, but it would be wrong to charge the Sophists with

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4. See footnote page 31.

7. Burckhardt, GKG, III 209: "Dieser Zustand hatte seine Parallele in dem der französichen terreur 1793/4; in Athen aber muss es permanent mehr im höchsten Grade verruchte und dabei tatfähige Menschen gegeben haben als proportional in irgend einer jetzigen Grosstadt."

all the errors of that period. The Sophists could no more have undermined belief in the Homer and Hesiod epics, had they not found a response in the Greek people, than the scholars driven from Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 could have created the Italian Renaissance by themselves.

The Sophists were only an evidence of the great changes which were going on among the Greek people. It was not only the intellectuals who were touched by it. The Orphic cult, which found its way to Greece particularly under the rule of Peisistraus in Athens,[8] had great attraction for the common people. But we find its influence also in Pre-socratic philosophers. There was Heraclitus, who believed the world to be a continuous flow of contrasts. There was the School of Elea, which denied the existence of a physical world, while seeing reality only in an unchanging metaphysical world. There is Pythagoras with his school which also refuted the traditional concepts of the Olympic gods and built up a new ethics trying to find reality through the study of mathematical relations. To this last school of thought in particular we will return in the next chapter, because a relation between the teachings of the Pythagoreans and Plato is very obvious.

Opposition to the Sophists originated to a large extent in the fact that Greek social and political life demanded an instruction in all kinds of techniques and sciences which were

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8. 561-527 B.C.

not purely philosophical. The teachers of rhetorics, debating and all kinds of other fields were intruders into the sacred temple of learning, and the sages did not like this. The Greek people had come to a stage of development where learning could no longer be the exclusive right of priests and aristocrats.[9] Democracy raised many people with limited means to a position of importance. A Greek middle class was arising with demands and conditions different from those of the aristocratic state. It was a necessity for the Sophists to ask remuneration for their services in order to perform their profession. The Sophists were the teachers of the Greek people and the difference with our modern educational institutions lies chiefly in the fact that the organization of schools was not yet known.

If today we find it necessary to defend the position of the Sophists it is because Plato is one of the most widely read Greek authors and he condemns the Sophists. However, the opinion of as great a man as Plato is not to be discarded without careful consideration. Allowing for the possibility that Plato's opinion may have been to a large extent moulded by party prejudices and the influence of Socrates, we must not overlook the fact that Athenian democracy was a new phenomenon

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9. Burckhardt, GKG, II 379: (speaking about the Sophists) "Die Hauptsache aber war das viele positive Wissen, womit sie /die Sophisten/ einer Zeit entgegenkamen, die wenige Bücher und einen grossen Wissenstrieb besass."

in human society which still was too young to be as thoroughly analyzed with all its consequences as it is today. We can also well imagine that the Sophists' methods of instruction were objectionable, and that there must have been definite ethical faults which spoiled their reputation for all time. It so often happens that objections to a method of operation are mistaken for an objection to the thing itself.[10] Even if /Plato's opinion of the Sophists may have been prejudiced, his attack was primarily against the method of this public teaching, and if we are interested to see the situation in what is probably its true light, we must liberate ourselves from popular but hasty generalizations.

The essential element of the Greek period of enlightenment was the outgrown belief of the Greeks in a primitive religion with nothing to take its place. Such a situation necessarily leads to syncretism and more thoughtful persons seek a rational substitute in philosophy or turn to a material positivism. We have similar problems today.

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Therefore, we can understand if such an extraordinary personality as Plato puts so much emphasis on metaphysical problems in trying to solve a political problem. This was not

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10. The French express this dilemma with the proverb: "C'est le ton qui fait la musique."

due alone to the influence of Socrates, although he had been a preparer of the way. Plato is not a philosopher interested only in metaphysical problems and neglecting political affairs. According to the tradition of his family, politics would have been his normal profession. His deep philosophical nature gave him an understanding of the elements of government without which good statesmanship is impossible.

Plato lived from 427 to 347 B.C. The first twenty years of his life fall into the period of the Great Peloponnesian War[11] and we have hardly any information about him during that time. We know that he was a son of Ariston, an Athenian nobleman, and Periktione, who was a descendent of Solon, and a cousin of Critius, one of the Thirty who governed Athens after the Peloponnesian War.

Coming from aristocratic circles, we must believe that Plato was brought up in an atmosphere which was opposed to the Athenian democracy. Prejudices planted in childhood are difficult to eradicate, and this makes us rather cautious in accepting Plato's judgment of democracy. We are generally more aware of the weaknesses of an opponent than of his good traits. Nevertheless a man with the greatness of Plato also has the ability to liberate himself from petty prejudices. It would be wrong to interpret his stand against democracy as only a class prejudice.

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11. 431-404 B.C.

The long Peloponnesian War had brought Athens into a very serious situation. The best period of the city was still fresh in the minds of its citizens, but its strength was undermined physically as well as morally. If the conflict had been only a quarrel among Greek powers, the situation would not have been so serious, but the existence of the Hellenic nation was at stake. The Persians had been pushed back at the beginning of the fifth century, but the conflict had never been properly resolved, and when one Greek state negotiated with Persia against another Greek state, the Persians were only too glad to use one Greek force against another. While Persia was still a menace until it was conquered by Alexander of Macedonia, the Phoenicians of Carthage were about to tear Sicily out of the hands of the colonial Greeks. The Greeks, like the Phoenicians, were seafaring, commercial peoples and especially in the western Mediterranean the two were in each other's way.

For the Greek states to continue their internal quarrels while their country was of great strategic importance and even between two fires, was a desperate situation. If it had been a quarrel between two clearly cut parties, with the Athenians as democrats contending with the Spartans standing for aristocratic government, the situation would have been far less harmful, because the victory of one party would have defeated the other and the problem could have been put aside. But in Athens there was a split between the democratic party and the aristocrats, and in Sparta's conquered territories only a little

encouragement was needed to set off rebellion.

Being a nobleman, Plato could quite naturally have found a place in the aristocratic party, but when in 404 B.C. by the grace of Sparta the aristocratic party had a chance to take over the rule over Athens, the misrule of the Thirty Tyrants was so bad that the previous democratic government seemed to have been heaven. In such a government by those of his own caste Plato wanted no part, and we see Plato turning to philosophy in search of a solution to the difficult situation.

We can well imagine that as profound a young man as Plato must have gone through severe inner struggles. There was the delicate international political situation, Greece being between two great powers. There was the endless feud with Sparta, the aristocratic state, with whom the Athenian aristocrats sympathized. There was the further problem that the young nobleman disagreed not only by tradition but by independent conviction with the leading party of his home city, the democrats, and this caused a conflict between his own sense of right and his obligation towards his city. There may have been further personal problems. A young man of such capacity not only wants to learn everything, he also wants social life, and only through one's own experiences and dissatisfaction with the shallowness of ordinary society does an individual standpoint begin to grow.

In the decaying Athenian society of his time, Socrates appeared like a rock. He was the incorruptible, the man who

believed in a higher value of man and was consistently determined to live what he considered to be right. His personality and manners may have been rather queer, but once in conversation with him, his religious ethical stand overshadowed all shortcomings.

This was the man who really could set the young Plato on the right track. The impression which he made on Plato was tremendous. Socrates was the understanding, fatherly friend unafraid to look at any problem squarely. His high ethical standard enabled him to see clearly the issues involved in the Athenian state and later he was even ready to accept an unjust death sentence, which he could easily have escaped, because it was against his principles to refuse to accept the sentence of a constitutional government.

Plato's works show that he was well acquainted with all the important philosophies and teachings of his time, but it is Socrates who sets his heart on fire. The philosophers and teachers gave principally theories and speculations about a supersensible world. Socrates out of a deep religious conviction taught something which he earnestly lived himself. This does not imply that other thinkers quite in general did not live what they taught, but Plato could not have gained from their personalities the same vivid impression made on him by Socrates, with whom he had such a close personal relationship.

However, Plato's introduction of Socrates in most of his dialogues should not be taken to mean that Plato only wrote

down what Socrates said. In his later works the pupil goes far beyond his teacher. Plato himself was too great a mind to take over somebody else's ideas without shaping them himself into a harmonious unity. It can be well explained as evidence of Plato's lasting gratitude to his teacher that he erected a monument to Socrates in his dialogues. He made Socrates the spokesman of his most precious thoughts, although the Platonic Socrates far surpasses the living Socrates in richness of thought. Socrates is a constant check in the mind of his great pupil. Plato idealized him and developed his thought to what Plato imagined would have been his teacher's conclusions and judgment, if he had lived longer.

Great men generally feel lonely because they find hardly any one who really understands the depth of their thought. Plato's talks with his great teacher in his dialogues can also be interpreted as a refreshing of the memory of the man who really understood him. Although Plato had in Aristotle a very famous student in his school, the difference in mental disposition did not allow the same deep friendship which had prevailed between Socrates and Plato.

Socrates showed his pupil the way out of his problem. The deep religiosity of the teacher first of all gave Plato the sense of direction which his own life needed in a degenerating society. It gave him ideal values, a principle promising a rational approach to the social problems. It gave him the elements with which to build up a whole structure of political

theory - a political program - which appeared to him to be a solution of the anarchical conditions prevailing in Greece. In view of the seriousness of the situation, we cannot believe that Plato just played with an idealistic state which perhaps in the distant future mankind would follow when more advanced and reasonable. As we will see in the next chapter, Plato goes very far in his political theories, but the political situation in Greece was such that only a radical plan could promise a remedy. In writing his Republic Plato used all the political experience available to him and brought in the relationship with the metaphysical standpoint for which Socrates may have given the inspiration.

Plato's program was of an idealistic nature. We know from his Seventh Epistle[12] and other letters which are accepted today as genuine, that he had hopes that his program could be adopted in Syracuse on the Island of Sicily, but his plans finally led to a hopeless disappointment. We may feel sorry that the great philosopher had to witness the failure of his program, but with the experience which world history has furnished since Plato we may well say that it was impossible. At the time of the two Dionysii the Greeks on Sicily were already very hard pressed by the Punians. There was no time for experimenting and the replacement of the democracy by tyranny seemed necessary in order to hold Sicily for the Greeks.[13] Many readers of Plato

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12. Plato, TEP.

13. Burckhardt, GKG, 175-178.

disregard the precariousness of the situation at that time and we are tempted to wonder whether Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan[14] would not have provided a more appropriate program than the idealistic Republic. Plato's second large political work, The Laws, shows a tendency in this direction. Too high an idealism can provide no practical solution when things are at the point of collapse.

In our investigation, however, we are interested in Plato's first plan, the Republic, the plan without compromise. Here he outlines a rational political system which has its foundation in the metaphysical synopsis of the philosopher. Although this plan is based on the experience of Greek life, the philosopher tries to reach unchanging general principles which are not just applicable for Greek politics, but politics and human life in general.

The Greek microcosmos has in many ways gone through stages of history similar to those through which today's macrocosmos is passing. This similitude of Greek history suggests an analogy to our own problems. That is why we are so much interested today in Hellas's most prominent writers and in the forefront of them all, Plato with his dialogues - the most important of them being his Republic.

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14. Hobbes. Lev.

CHAPTER II

PLATO'S REPUBLIC

While we know little about Plato's life from sources other than his own works, there is still the way of analogy to other personalities which can afford us a deeper insight into his thinking.[1] Regarding the Republic from a merely formal point of view, we become aware that heterogeneous elements have been worked into the original text, disturbing its unity. We are reminded of a modern piece of world literature with a similar defect: Goethe's Faust.[2]

It is known that Faust remained an unfinished manuscript almost to Goethe's last days. While he conceived the idea for such a drama quite early in his life, it took Goethe a lifetime to bring it to completion. A work whose parts have been written at such different periods of the poet's life cannot have such unity as has, for instance, Hermann und Dorothea[2] which he wrote in an amazingly short time. The spasmodically written Faust could not have this quality, but it gained a new one. Faust became the most complete expression of the development

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1. Hume, EHU, Section VIII, Part I: "Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English: you cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former most of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter."

2. Goethe, GOE.

of Goethe's thought. It is the mental biography of one of the most outstanding men who ever lived. A poet whose writings are so much the expression of his own experience cannot express in his art what he has not experienced. The last scenes of the second part of Faust, presenting Faust as the old sage looking back on the great experience of an intensive life, Goethe could not possibly have written before he himself was an old man and could look back on his own life.

The formal imperfections of the Republic are of a similar nature. Just as Goethe wrote in Faust his own biography, so Plato wrote in the Republic his philosophic and political conception. Difference of views as expressed in different dialogues makes it quite clear that Plato did not hold the same views throughout his whole life. But how could his expanding experience have failed to amplify Plato's outlook? And how could he have left his main program unchanged by fresh outlooks? Just as Goethe in his last days was occupied with the completion of his Faust, so we can well imagine that Plato in his old age felt the need to undertake a revision of his Republic and to complement it in its most important passages with the deeper insight of a riper age. It is therefore very probable that the most valuable parts in the fifth to the seventh books[3] dealing with the philosopher-ruler and his metaphysical insight,

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3. St. 471C-541B.

as well as the unfinished book ten[4] were written at a later date than the others.

An analogy between Plato and Goethe, however, does not restrict itself to some formal parallels about their chief masterpieces. In their personalities, too, there is some resemblance. Both men have this in common, that not only in their mental disposition but also physically they were well equipped and both came from well-to-do circles.[5] Their lives were, therefore, not restricted by financial struggles. They were both exceptionally harmonious personalities, men who were endowed with all that, according to material reasoning, makes a man successful and happy. But for them that was not enough. They both strove for something higher. They were not satisfied with a comfortable material life. The inner urge for the metaphysical truth on the one hand and the restrictions of their physical experience on the other, were the problems of their lives. It was an aesthetic yearning for something more than just the material that was foremost in their thought. Goethe expresses this problem in his drama Tasso,[6] where the oversensitive poet Tasso and the skilled politician Antonio cannot recognize each other's raison d'être. This was Goethe the artist and Goethe the statesman who could not be reconciled

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4. St. 595D-621D.

5. Engel, GDL.

6. Goethe, GOE.

to each other, and Plato's writings also show us that Plato the metaphysician and Plato the statesman were at war with each other.

In Plato this struggle may not have been so pronounced, because Plato's statesmanship remained theoretical and he never had actually to serve two masters as did Goethe - the inner vocation and bureaucratic duty. The dialogue in the Republic between Socrates, Adeimantos and Glaucon, the teacher with the two brothers of Plato, has not the strong contraversy which exists between Tasso and Antonio, or Faust and Mephistopheles. Plato is concerned with developing by means of the dialogue the principles which he considers basic for good statesmanship. Goethe , on the other hand, was more concerned with the personal problems arising out of his practical statesmanship, for they were his own problem. This comparison may well lead us to the conclusion that if Plato had had an opportunity for practical statesmanship, his writing would have come down from the consideration of philosophical principles to the treatment of personal human problems as did Goethe's. In the Laws such a tendency is apparent.

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However, the interest in the Republic for the purpose of this thesis is its theoretical character. It is a theoretical plan, based on Greek political experience, which, as we have seen in the last chapter, has many similarities to our modern political experience. It is largely due to its theoretical

nature that it has an importance far beyond the particular problems which it was intended to solve. The Republic is a timeless measuring rod, representing the rational approach to social and political problems. Being outside the Christian doctrine, it is uncontaminated by any Christian wishful thinking, and while Plato certainly is not free from wishful thinking, he could not be as irrational[7] as some of the early Christian doctrines are.

With regard to Swiss democracy we can appreciate in Plato an entirely objective political theorist, and his standpoint may serve as a challenge to our judgment which may be biased by our own interests.

Let us therefore proceed to a synopsis of the Republic.

This chief work of Plato is divided into ten books of about equal length. The opinion is held[8] that this division was made by Plato's publisher, because in most cases the incision does not coincide with the organic structure of the whole work. This may not be the case with the first book, which is believed to have circulated much earlier than the rest of the work as a separate dialogue under the name of Thrasymachus.

From the second to the ninth book the divisions are more or less artificial and the tenth book falls outside the structure

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7. e.g. doctrine of the trinity of God.

8. Windelband, Pla.

of the whole work. Book ten appears to be a later appendix, a restatement of the theory of ideas and a treatment of justice after death, both of which may have been occasioned by criticism of the earlier parts of the work, or they may be a late addition comparable to the last parts of Faust. The other later addition about the philosopher-ruler and Plato's metaphysics has been worked into the central part of the Republic.

For an orientation to the content of the Republic let us recall the conditions which led Plato to write this work. In the last chapter we have seen the enormous political and social difficulties which Athens, and Greece as a whole, had to face during Plato's lifetime. We have tried to understand the deep impression made on the young philosopher by Socrates, who must have seemed at least one sure rock in a crumbling world. We have seen how the deep conviction of the fatherly sage convinced Plato of the substance of a metaphysical world, and therefore gave him assurance that only from this point of view - sub specie aeternitatis - could a remedy for the hopeless political situation be found.

The Republic is the thorough treatise of Plato's political standpoint. But this standpoint was closely connected with Plato's whole Weltanschauung. A treatise on political problems not anchored in his metaphysics would be impossible for Plato, and dealing with metaphysics without relating it to the problems of his time, would have been treating with the cause without thinking of the effect. Only the two together

give a completeness of purpose, and Plato was not a theoretical thinker who disregarded practice.[9] His theory was for practice. Even if Plato was obliged to give up his hope that the Republic could be put into practice in its full program, our treatment of Swiss political history undertakes to make clear how important a constitutive idea is for the development of a country.

The Republic represents the constitutive idea which the practical state was to approach as closely as possible. It is therefore the ideal state, impossible to be realized in its full extent. But this ideal state is a measuring rod for all political problems and as such the Republic has had a great influence on political and social history.

A less outstanding man than Plato, living under the same circumstances, would have written the Republic as a conservative moralizing textbook, lamenting existing conditions and calling his readers "back to religion". Plato, however, submits to his reader a very unorthodox plan. He is a political surgeon. He puts his finger on those influences on social and political life which are detrimental. But a surgeon cannot remove some part of a living body without replacing it by something which can substitute its function, and although the operation itself may be a success, there may still be a question whether the patient can live under the altered conditions as comfortably as before. In analyzing the Athenian state Plato comes to the

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9. Plato, TEP.

conclusion that personal property of the ruling class has undesirable effects on the performance of their governmental functions. He works out a plan according to which the ruling class should be without personal fortunes. Nothing should distract them from their governmental obligations and all temptations to personal enrichment should be removed. It should be the obligation of the governed class, the merchants, craftsmen and peasants, to support their rulers and to care for the economic needs of the state. This of course is a very far-reaching operation on the body politic and requires a completely new orientation in the economic structure of the state. While Plato was little interested in the economic part of his operation, he was chiefly concerned with the organizing of the newly created ruling caste, and this onesidedness may arouse some criticism.

Nevertheless, the Republic has the great quality of a very original plan to remedy Athenian and Greek society, but it has also the deficiency of any speculation: it cannot conform to the opinions of all.

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Let us now glance over the Republic in the order which Plato has given it.

We have already mentioned that the first book may have appeared much earlier than the rest of the work under the name of Thrasymachus. The search for a definition of the virtue of

justice is the leading thought. It runs through the first book, and is a constitutive idea for the whole work.

What is justice? is the great question occupying the Platonic Socrates on a visit to the Piraeus, and in a discussion at the house of the aged Cephalus, who is preparing himself for death. The opinion of the host is that justice is the capacity to speak the truth and be free of debt. Cephalus had been a sober man throughout his life and his opinion is that of the good-natured average man. His son Polemarchus is introduced into the dialogue in order to express the effects of justice on human life.

Here Thrasymachus, the Sophist and demagogic teacher, enters the conversation, exposing a merely utilitarian justice, a justice not based on general principle, about which Socrates is concerned, but on mere expediency.

We have described the nature of the Sophists in the last chapter in an objective way and here become acquainted with Plato's opinion of them. For him they are a component part of disintegrating Athenian society. They seem to be concerned with the same questions as the philosophers, not for the sake of wisdom, however, but merely in order to earn money. They make their living by teaching Greek youth rhetorics and other techniques useful for the social and political life of the Greek democracy. Thrasymachus' conception of justice is merely conformity to the existing law. The law is made by him who has political power, and that is the strong man. Thrasymachus

therefore represents the right of the strong man, the Faust-recht[10] and does not care whether this justice accords with general principles. In an elegantly led dialogue Socrates exposes the weakness and inadequacy of such a standpoint. Thrasymachus' point of view is Plato's exposure of the wrongness of thinking in the Athenian democracy.

The end of the first book brings the exposure of the sickness of Greek democracy, but the remedy is not yet found. The discussion has demonstrated the effect of justice on human life, but Socrates is unsatisfied not to have found a real definition of justice.

It is here, at the beginning of the second book, that the trio of the Republic sets to work. Socrates is the leader of the discussion, while Glaucon, the enthusiastic younger brother of Plato, is his chief partner, and the more philosophic elder brother Admeimantus assists him. Glaucon proposes to Socrates to carry on Thrasymachus' standpoint still further until its falsity is clearly evident. In other words, Plato wanted to analyze it beyond its merely empirical aspect. Expediency motives for justice are considered: justice for fear of the consequences of doing wrong, justice for the sake of reputation, justice in speculation for repayment by the gods. If it is enough to perform one's religious duties to secure a happy life

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10. Right of the fist. In German the medieval Interregnum (1250-1273) is often called Faustrecht.

after death and there is no obligation to live a just life, why assume the hardships of an ethical life? Why be just if injustice is so much more profitable?

Here Plato shakes thoroughly the popular religious and ethical concepts, and for the sake of justice he must discard the belief that any kind of a heaven-insurance can be true. The same criterion of justice obliges him to believe in an absolute metaphysical justice from which not even he can escape who, after an unjust life, dies before experiencing the consequences of his action.

Here the inadequacy of popular beliefs and popular justice is thoroughly exposed. The basis on which Athenian democracy rests is made bare. It is quite clear that only a state which is built on the understanding of absolute justice has a possibility to last. But how to achieve this? Athenian democracy, whose inadequacy has just been revealed, is no institution on which a firm political foundation can be built. A political structure is needed in which that man guides the state who is really able to recognize absolute justice in its highest form, and where the word of the philosopher is not covered by immature opinions. Glaucon and Adeimantus, having done their best to expose the superficial popular attitude towards justice, now turn to Socrates, expecting from him the real answer to the problem. Plato then outlines his own plan.

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He begins his exposition with the elements of a human

settlement. He pictures a primitive city concerned only with providing the necessities for simple living. Because the desires in such a city are modest, there is little occasion for friction among the citizens.

The situation is quite different in a rich city. Plato moves to the examination of a city of the character of Athens. Here the citizens are not content with their bare needs. They are accustomed to a comfortable life with all kinds of luxuries, and in such a city there are not only craftsmen to provide the bare necessities of life, but there are arts and resources for the satisfaction of the more refined desires. While it is easy to rule the first city and to keep its social life in balance, in the rich city the essential principles which keep a political structure in good order are not so easily found. Plato does not make concrete allusions, but the reader of the Republic may well imagine that Sparta with its modest and simple social life was a kind of ideal for him. His aristocratic background and inclination made him well aware of the deficiencies of his home city, while he may have been lenient towards the less ideal elements in the Spartan state because of sympathy with its aristocratic order.

For the rich city external conflicts are inevitable. The state therefore needs an armed force and in ancient and modern times it has always been a problem to prevent those who have the power in a state from using their power against their

own people. The governing body and the warrior must therefore have a particularly fine understanding of what is right in order to make such misuse impossible.

The education of the rulers and of the guardians, as Plato calls those who have administrative and war duties, therefore needs particular consideration in his plan. It is from among these guardians that, under his system, the rulers are selected. It is this circle, the aristocracy, which Plato considers capable of the development of the more refined human qualities. It is this circle which is ready for a metaphysical understanding of justice and is able to administer the state not only for their own sake, but for the welfare of the whole population, which, as we have seen earlier, is expected to support it economically.

These guardians should not only be trained in the use of arms. The artistic element in them should be developed too. But in the selection of the means of art Plato proposes a thorough purification. For Plato, the artistic and religious elements go together. As much as he appreciates the artistic form of ancient Greek poetry, for educational reasons he cannot allow misrepresentation of the Deity. Not only the Sophists, but religious movements like the Dionysian cult and many a philosophic school, had greatly weakened belief in the veracity of the Olympic gods, and Plato, too, found it inadmissible for youth to form its ideals after anthropomorphic gods and their arbitrary actions.

God, as presented at the end of the second book of the

Republic, is an immovable, perfect being and includes no evil. Plato opposes the view that God has created evil. Any representation of God as the giver of good and evil is therefore a misrepresentation, according to Plato's most sacred concepts, and if such misrepresentations are made by Homer and Hesiod, such authors, as far as they be incorrect in their views, should be kept from contaminating the future guardians of the Platonic state.

Plato is also against visiting the theater. His objection to the theatrical play is its tendency to stir up the emotions, while good education has as one of its main objects to keep emotions in check.

Plato is also very rigorous concerning the cure of disease. He is not in favor of perpetuating weakness through constant doctoring. The function of the physician is to watch over the health of a sound citizenry, just as the function of the judge is to watch over the moral health of the population. Therefore, he himself must be morally sound. Understanding of the principle of sound living and acting should prevent aberrations.

In all phases of life Plato tries to find equilibrium. And this equilibrium is Plato's conception of justice. In the parable of the charioteer in the Phaedrus,[12] justice prevails if the charioteer is able to master the horse of the physical senses as well as the good horse, and the team moves along smoothly. Justice prevails in the state if all phases of life

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12. Plato, DoP.

are well in hand, everybody performing his function well and minding his own business. The ideal is perfect cooperation and in such a state there is very little to be corrected. Every one has his own sense of justice and does not need correction from outside.

It is wisdom which gives the guardians the synopsis for guidance of the Polis. It requires courage to control one's action by ideals and not to give way to temptations. And it is temperance which enables us to find the right proportion and measure in all our doings. The perfect coordination of wisdom, courage and temperance brings forth the perfect equilibrium for which Plato finds the term justice adequate. Justice is therefore the key virtue and this is the essence of what cannot be defined materially but is an integral part of human life.

While Plato has now found the essence of the virtue of justice, the solution of his ethical problem alone does not guarantee the permanent application of justice in this higher sense. He has given his advice for the training and education of the guardians, but how to uphold the high standard is now the problem.

The proposal of community living and the position of women in this community are perhaps the most criticized points in Plato's philosophy. Nevertheless, Plato is not proposing an institution which is without precedent in his age. A com-

parison with the Spartan institution[13] shows that Plato had a pattern to follow. Windelband[14] lays great stress on the important influence of the Pythagorean school on Plato - particularly on the old Plato. The great similarity between Pythagorean thought and Plato's program points to the conclusion that Plato was influenced by this school far beyond the use of Pythagorean mathematics.

According to Burckhardt[15] Pythagoras was strongly influenced by Dionysian and Egyptian religious ideas. His metempsychosis may even have been affected by Indian thought. The Pythagorean school was a closed aristocratic circle living a monastic life, respecting highly the teachings of their master and regarding material life as a state of penitence, while a metaphysical world, a world of reason and figures, was regarded as the true universe. However, this circle was not exclusively intellectual. It prescribed the religious, artistic and moral life of its adherents, and - this is especially noteworthy - the position of the woman was equal to that of the man.

The spiritual relation of the Pythagorean institution to Plato's Republic makes us suspect that Plato was much influenced by the Pythagoreans. While the lack of culture in

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13. Burckhardt, GKG, chapter on Sparta.

14. Windelband, GAP; Pla., 122, 141.

15. Burckhardt, GKG, II, 364-373.

Sparta must have caused Plato to feel some reserve about advocating the Spartan system for Athens, the Pythagorean circle was an institution which must have greatly attracted his interest.

Knowing such a circle, Plato would quite naturally be inclined to transform it for his purposes and advance it further. The state in which justice depends on a ruling class can live only if the perpetuation of that ruling class is ensured. Let us remember what great sacrifices nations have endured in more recent times to secure an heir to their throne.[16] Is it then astonishing if Plato makes so radical a proposal in order to secure the perpetuation of his just state? The perpetuation of good government is one of the leading problems of history[17] and it is one of the great assets of democracy that this problem can be ruled out.

Plato, however, having decided against democracy, has to give the problem of perpetuation due consideration. After having given his state a rational ethics, it is not surprising if he also wants to bring the problem of perpetuation under rational control. He sacrifices the family of the ruling circle, and tries to breed the rulers of the future. The guardians should not have their own families. The male and female guardians, the fittest of the nation, should live in community and within this circle there should be free sexual relations. The children should be held in common and so the survival of the

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16. e.g. War of Spanish Succession 1700-1714.

17. Steiger, art. "Making Democracy Dynamic".

fittest be secured. With the light which modern science has thrown on this subject we may smile at Plato's proposal, but we must not forget that he lived at a time when such a proposal was very advanced. Furthermore, in giving the women of the ruling class an adequate share in political responsibility and in war he touches a problem which even today is not beyond discussion. Nevertheless, in this respect he had the Pythagorean pattern to follow.

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Having offered a plan which should guarantee a fit young generation of guardians, in books six and seven Plato reveals his expectations of the philosopher and of his fitness to rule the state.

For Plato the true philosopher is the metaphysician, the man who has an apprehensive faith in the reality of a metaphysical world and seeks in it the explanation for the existence of the universe. Plato expects the philosopher to be aestheticist and rationalist combined. He is the man who, through an understanding faith in the oneness of the universe, is able to deduce the answers to the problems of physical life, answers which at the same time are comprehensive, ethically sound and harmonious.

Experience in Greece and elsewhere teaches that the public does not seem to have much use for the philosopher. But the fact is, that the crowd does not want to listen to his counsel

which is based on reflections which may go beyond those of the average man.

How great is the temptation under such conditions for the man who would have the outstanding disposition of a philosopher not to follow his higher inclination but to use his gifts for mere material success, to go with the crowd, to give what it wants from him, and to be torn down into a mediocre life. Once such a man is on this level he is even ready to turn against the high standard which he would have been able to defend. It is possible that when Plato wrote these passages, he thought of Alcibiades, also a pupil of Socrates', endowed with extraordinary gifts physically as well as mentally, but who brought disaster on his home city.

The real philosopher, however, who does not yield to temptations, has little opportunity under the conditions of disintegration such as those in Greece, to render a real service to his people. They are not willing to listen to him and act on his counsel. They would not be ready to correct the errors in their political life and to establish the right basis on which a sound state can be built. What else can the philosopher do under such conditions but retire from political life, guard his spiritual treasures and wait for an opportunity to use them?[18] Here Plato may have thought of Socrates who preferred to keep aloof from political life and devote himself to the private teaching of youth. Plato may also have thought of himself. He, too, had avoided Athenian politics and had devoted himself

18. Rep., St. 496C-497A.

to teaching, while waiting eagerly for an opportunity to put his political ideas into practice.

Aware of Plato's disappointments over Greek politics, we can well understand why he worked out a plan according to which the philosophically gifted youth could be spared the detrimental influences of ordinary life. Moreover, he had the example of the Pythagorean school and their ability to govern their state.

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So far Plato has presented metaphysical substance as justice, and at the end of the second book he explains God as changeless and perfect good which does not create evil. The end of the sixth book and the beginning of the seventh contain the two centerpieces of the whole work, the myth of the sun and the myth of the cave. Plato tries to give his idea of God. He finds human language inadequate to voice his thought and chooses to express himself in the form of a parable. More than any other organ of the body, the eye expresses the spirit of a person. As the eye relates to other organs of the body, so the spirit of man is related to his material appearance. But how could the eye see without the sun? Without this central light/no eye can see. What the sun is to the human eye, God is to the human spirit. God is the summum bonum, the constitutive principle of all existence - pure reason.

Plato arrives at a concept of God which is monotheistic,

but not anthropomorphic. It is not a Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. However, it is evident that Plato himself has not a clear concept of the full entity of his God. He shows this in the introduction to this passage.[19] The Platonic Socrates is pushed by his two pupils to a declaration of his concept of God and in making it clear that he is uttering a hypothesis Socrates relates the myth of the sun.

In the passages where Plato speaks of his highest concepts we may be sure that he expresses something for which he finds human language inadequate. He speaks in symbols and the reader must not miss the higher meaning with which Plato is actually concerned. Plato believes that the spiritual sphere of God is real being, while the material world has only a seeming existence. It is only the image of existence. To follow Plato in these thoughts - his philosophic belief - requires, Plato believes, a man who is above the average. The man who can follow him in his philosophic belief and understand the substance of it, beholds the true conception of the principles of the universe, and he is the man who should lead in political affairs.

This conviction is expressed in the second of the two myths, the myth of the cave. It is supposed that in a cave prisoners are chained with their faces towards the walls and

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19. Rep., St. 506D-507A.

behind them a fire is burning. Having never had an occasion to see anything but the shadows of their bodies on the walls, they take these shadows as reality and not as a shadow of their bodies, which they really are. Let us suppose that one of the prisoners succeeds in liberating himself, turns around and sees the truth of the situation. He will no longer believe that the shadow of his body is its substance. And if he walks out of the cave into the sunlight, he will get the true concept of light, the sunlight. However, at the beginning the abundance of light will blind his eyes until he gets accustomed to the richness of the full sunlight.

The philosopher is such a prisoner who liberates himself. His desire to get free finally brings him to the full light, and to enjoyment such as he had not deemed possible. Plato, however, expects of the philosopher that once he has realized the full truth he will return to his comrades and help them to liberate themselves. Coming back into the darkness it takes time for him to get accustomed again to the dim light of the cave, and when he tells his comrades what he has seen they make fun of him and find it ridiculous that he no longer sees just as well in the dark as they do.

Those who liberate themselves from their imprisonment in the cave are the men whom Plato wants to entrust with the government of the state. But he realizes that such men would be rather hesitant to accept such duties. They have been seeking truth for its own sake and once they have found it, it is their

greatest enjoyment to remain in its spiritual atmosphere. Plato, however, declares it their duty to go back and help their comrades. In other words, he appeals to the altruism of these truth-seekers to lead others to the enjoyment they have found for themselves. The worthy candidate for political leadership is the man who renounces personal advantages for the benefit of others. He does not advertise his services, and accepts responsibilities on behalf of the people only if they give him their confidence because of his outstanding qualities. The nature of the Platonic aristocracy is a benevolent aristocracy, and any assertion of governmental rights for selfish purposes in the way of the tyrannis, as we will see later on, draws Plato's sharpest condemnation.

Having indicated in the myth of the cave the role of the philosopher-ruler, Plato reverts once more to the problem of his education. In the previous treatments of the upbringing of the future rulers he discussed the more rudimental training, while in the seventh book he is interested in finding the means which may help the young man to break loose from the fetters of conventional beliefs.

This means of liberation Plato sees in mathematics. Arithmetic, geometry and astronomy should be taken up successively and widen the concepts of the pupil, develop his reasoning and finally prepare his capacity of synopsis, the capacity which, according to Plato, distinguishes the philosopher from the ordinary man. Nevertheless, Plato does not

overestimate the value of mathematics. He does not believe that mathematics itself leads into metaphysics, but believing in a rational universe, he recognizes that mathematics contributes to mastery in one's profession and in material life and he believes that mastery in these lower things is a preparation for metaphysical thinking.

With the treatment of the final education of the philosopher-rulers in the state, Plato's political program is complete. The society of his Republic has a hierarchical structure. The bulk of the population belongs to the third class. It is the economic class, made up of the people who have a craft, a trade or are peasants, but have no political responsibility. The second class is formed by the guardians, who on one side are the professional warriors, and at the same time form the bulk of the administrative body. Together with the ruling class they are living in community and under the conditions which Plato depicts in the Republic, and which we have discussed here. Out of the class of guardians the best people are selected for the ruling class. They are the philosophers and are the people who have the capacity to liberate themselves from the fetters of the cave. They must bear the responsibility of governing the state. They are the men to whom Plato looks to give the state the firm and principled government in which Plato believes can be found the solution of any political problem.

We are apt to think that Plato's plan is impossible to

be realized, but we ought not to overlook the fact that it has been realized. The monastic life of Catholic orders has very much the structure of Plato's Republic. While the layman can be likened to the economic class in Plato's plan, fratres and patres share in community living, the fratres, corresponding to the guardians, doing the inferior work, while the patres form the inner circle of an order. We know how old many of the Catholic orders are and their system pays tribute to the plan Plato worked out more than 2300 years ago. The hierarchical system of the Roman Catholic Church as a whole is built up on this principle and if today we feel inclined to take a political view different from Plato we must have well founded reasons for deviating from such a well established tradition.

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Plato's criticism of democracy is strong. We find it in the eighth book of the Republic. His plan now being exposed, Plato has grounds for discussing the existing forms of political constitutions. We see democracy depicted as the result of a progressive decadence. It starts with monarchy changing gradually to an aristocracy. The better form of aristocracy degrades to timocracy, the timocracy to an oligarchy, and finally, as ordinary people secure political rights, democracy becomes established, a form of government where everybody does what he likes, where decisions are taken through emotion and the superior character has to submit to the inferior masses.

We have described the conditions of Athenian democracy in the last chapter and there is no doubt that, although Plato as an Athenian aristocrat may be prejudiced, there is justification for criticism. Plato's development of disintegration can be read out of Athenian history. Athens began as a kingdom, turned into an aristocracy, and in its best period was a democracy. However, the process of disintegration does not stop at democracy. It turns into tyranny. Besides the tyranny under Cleisthenes and Peisistratus, Plato himself experienced the dreadful period of the rule of the Thirty, in which people of his immediate surrounding took a part. Here aristocrats under the protection of Sparta had replaced the democracy with an aristocratic government, and it was a terrible disappointment. The Rule of the Thirty was actually a tyranny and Plato's detailed observation of the detriments of a tyranny may have been mostly gathered from the time of the Thirty, who, by-the-way, were also responsible for the death of Socrates. Plato's descriptions of tyranny find understanding readers today, when we are witness to tyrannies of the worst sort. As described in the tenth book of the Republic, tyranny is for Plato one of the unforgivable sins.

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The tenth book of the Republic actually consists of two independent appendices, written much later than the bulk of the work. One gives a complete presentation of Plato's theory

of the ideas, the other an insight into Plato's conceptions of life after death and of absolute justice. These two additions cannot be regarded as finished products, although for a comprehension of the Republic as a whole they are important to the reader.

The first part of this book gives a schematic presentation of three stages in the conception of reality, and is expressed in the parable of the bed. A carpenter, in manufacturing a bed, has in his mind a conception of a bed. The process of manufacturing is actually copying this conception - idea or form - while the artist who paints a bed is only copying the image of the original conception. For Plato the idea of the bed in the carpenter's mind is to be compared with the metaphysical reality, while the physical bed is merely an image of the idea. Therefore the man who takes the physical bed as reality and makes an image of it actually creates an image of an image. This explains on the one hand Plato's objection to imitative art, but on the other hand it illustrates the remoteness from reality of those who base their decisions and actions on material phenomena. Plato likes to speak in symbols and therefore leaves wide possible variations of interpretation. It is hard to believe, though, that such an artist as Plato would attack a form of art without definite reasons for doing so. Just as we today turn our back on commercialized art because as such it has lost its higher purpose - a disinterested expression of harmony - so we can understand that an artist-philosopher, who through his intuitive perception of the

wholeness and oneness of the universe conceives of the highest artistic expression, must disapprove an inferior art. Plato's system is teleologic and perfectionistic. Anything that stops short of its highest realization of perfection has no right to exist. Hegel, in the preface to his Phenomenology of Mind, says that "the truth is the whole".[20] Plato feels the same way. Plato's entire concern is with the whole. Plato the artist tries to embrace this whole and Plato the philosopher tries to explain it.

We can therefore understand that Plato could not consider his Republic complete without having led his investigation into justice beyond mere material life. He cannot believe that death is an escape from justice. Plato believes in metempsychosis, he believes in progressus infinitum to perfection. His myths of life after death are but symbols of the real substance of Plato's thought. As long as our concepts of a life after death are based on mere speculation and feeling, we still have to honor the exalted conceptions of one of the most outstanding artist-philosophers. It is in these myths that Dante found the source for his imaginative depiction of hell and paradise in his Divina Comedia.[21] Plato touches on themes which we find in world literature in many forms. Mankind cannot imagine a complete and harmonious universe

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20. Hegel, PhG, 24.

21. Dante, DCA.

without absolute justice. It is this absolute justice which perpetuates the belief in metempsychosis. It is contrary to our ethical feeling that a man can die out of an unjust life. He will have to pay for his deeds, and reincarnation is but one of the possibilities conceived of by human imagination for establishing ethical equilibrium. There is also the hope that through many lives man can work out of injustice and ultimately find complete harmony in a kind of Nirvana.

The innermost principle of the universe Plato symbolizes by the spindle of necessity. Borrowing from the astronomical concepts of the time, Plato illustrates this principle by a system of coordinated circular movements, the planets rotating around the axis of the earth, and the perfect harmony of co-ordination producing the music of the spheres. In ethical terms this harmony is justice, the virtue representing the perfect coordination of wisdom, courage and temperance. The spindle of necessity can be taken to symbolize this concept of justice, around which the whole world revolves, and whose character must be understood in order to coordinate the functions of social life with it.

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In his myth on immortality Plato brings his perfectionistic system to completion. If we were to try to characterize the whole system which he describes in the Republic, we might call it hierarchical perfectionism. In its general structure

it resembles Hindu thought. In its application to the political problem, however, we find the concreteness of the western thought. As the Atlantic Charter has been declared the plan according to which a future democratic world will be built, so the Republic is the charter of the hierarchical system which gave Europe its order in the Middle Ages. Not only was there the hierarchy of the Church; a secular system existed besides. In the Republic we find three classes: the philosophers, the guardians and the governed class. Within the Church there is, similarly, the high clergy with the pope at its head, the lower clergy, and the laymen, and as already mentioned, the same division is to be found in monastery life. A similar division into three classes is to be noted in the secular administration: the high nobility with the emperor, first secular lord of Christianity, as its head, the lower nobility corresponding to the guardians, and the ordinary people.

This system found its highest development in the thirteenth century, the same century in which the Swiss Confederation was founded. It is an interesting fact that hierarchical perfectionism found its peak in the same century in which a new order was born.

Is this only a coincidence? This leads us to the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF SWISS DEMOCRACY

We have characterized the system which Plato outlined in his Republic as hierarchical perfectionism. The system on which the democratic nations today try to solve the political problems of their time may be characterized as democratic perfectionism. Not only Clarence Streit[1] but also many others[2] see the final solution of the international political problem in a world federal union, which would be an extension of the system already in existence in the United States of America, the Swiss Confederation, and a few other countries.

These plans may be considered as being at the point of development where Plato was when he wrote his Republic. His program had grown from experience. It had the Spartan and Pythagorean institutions as patterns and its aim was a re-establishment of peace within the Greek nation. His faith that the universe was governed by reason gave Plato confidence

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1. Streit, UN.

2. The City of Man, - CoM.

in the success of his plan, and even if he could not save his fatherland, his plan has had an enormous effect on the development of Europe.

It is a similar idealism coupled with the confidence in the good in man which induces us today to plan for a better super-national political system for the future. But we are only partly building on the same cornerstones which gave Plato hope for a solution of the political problem of his time. We are building on democracy, but a new kind of democracy,- Christian democracy. The Bible has given a spiritual concept of man, man made in the image and likeness of God, and this new concept of man gives new concepts and standards in social as well as political life.

Before we can pursue our way in constructing a political system different from that of Plato, however, we need to investigate the justification of our procedure. In looking for material for such an investigation, one of the best subjects is the oldest existing type of this kind of democracy, the Swiss Confederation.

Switzerland looks back on more than 650 years of almost uninterrupted development. It is a small political unit, and just as in the primitive city treated in the Republic[3] it is easier to maintain a political balance than in the richer, more complex city, so in Switzerland the political problems are less

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3. Rep., 369B-372C.

difficult because of the country's long democratic tradition and its size than is the case with the big sister republic across the Atlantic. Switzerland can, therefore, well be regarded as a laboratory of democracy.

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At the close of the last chapter we referred to the interesting coincidence that the Swiss Confederation was founded in the same century in which the hierarchical system of the Roman Catholic Church and its effect on secular administration - the feudalistic system - reached its peak.

It was in that century that Thomas Aquinas constructed his masterly summae which still remain the backbone of the Roman Catholic Church, which blended the traditional Christian doctrine, in the form accepted by the Church, with the Aristotelian encyclopaedic system of the physical world. The Thomistic system is a combination of the two component parts of western culture, the Greek and the Christian elements. It meant the end of the conflict which had gone on since the Christian doctrine had reached the shores of Europe, and it promised to bring about the harmony of which God's kingdom on earth is believed to be capable. It was a system complete in itself, needing only universal acceptance as the truth of all being in order for all the riddles of the world to be solved.

But not every one agreed. Criticism of the Thomistic system arose in the same century, and the British Scholastics

in particular took issue with it. Their deep sense of honesty did not allow them to disregard the evidence of the human senses in favor of the canonized system. The ensuing sharp conflict finds expression in the theory of the two worlds, or two truths, and thereby a new philosophical period began which found its conclusion only in the eighteenth century in Kant's criticism.

The resistance to Thomistic theology was not limited to the studies of scholars. A religious movement arose - in Germany in particular - which resisted making all religious feeling dependent on a system of canonized Christian teaching. The German Mystics found their own religious feeling a sufficient guide for their worship. It caused them to revolt against the scribes of the Middle Ages, against casuistic ethics It was a sort of religious free love, and may be considered as the precursor of the Reformation.

In political matters, too, the new spirit found expression. The Italian cities were emancipated. In the Holy Roman Empire, with the decadence of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, an entirely new structure came into being. The imperial crown lost its power and the German country nobility began to build up locally their own dynastic powers. In the life-time of one of the most powerful popes - Innocent III - the amazingly modern last important Hohenstaufen emperor, Frederic II, foreshadowed the

new spirit of emancipation.[4] And it is in this same century that the Swiss Confederation was founded.

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In comparison to other important happenings of the time, the foundation of the Swiss Confederation was a mustard seed, an unimportant local affair. Who at that time would have thought that out of that seed little by little a tree would grow?

Nevertheless there was one thing which gave the Swiss emancipation some immediate importance, and that was the newly opened St. Gotthard Pass. About 1230 a hanging bridge a few hundred yards long was constructed through a gorge, and thus the shortest way between Milan and the South German cities was in Swiss territory. In order to secure this pass for his imperial crown, Frederic II gave the bordering countries, Uri and Schwyz, charters as reichsfreie Länder.[5] The inhabitants of these countries, well aware of their new importance as a thoroughfare to Italy, were keen to make use of their charters.

However, there was also another party interested in the

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4. Burckhardt, KRI, 1-4.

5. Reichsfreie Länder. This meant that the countries of Uri and Schwyz had to recognize only the political authority of the emperor, but not that of a local lord. This is the same status that Free Cities (freie Reichsstädte) enjoyed.

control of the newly opened pass. The Counts of Hapsburg,[6] possessing territory in the Swiss Mittelland[7] and Alsace, protectors of the Fraumünster abbacy of Zurich and holders of rights of jurisdiction in the Forest cantons (as the original cantons on the Lake of Lucerne are called), wereof one of the noble families who succeeded in benefitting from the anarchic conditions of the Interregnum. The Hapsburgs had excellent chances because at that time several important noble families in the regions which later became part of Switzerland died out and the Hapsburgs were able to absorb their territory. Nothing seemed able to prevent the Hapsburgs from expanding their powers in the Forest Cantons beyond their rights and finally submerging them in the mass of their greatly increased territories.

It is under such conditions that the first mutual promise between the Forest Cantons was made. Its date is not known, but amendments in the official Bundesbrief[8] of 1291 clearly indicates the existence of an earlier contract.

Promises of mutual aid such as those of the Swiss Forest Cantons were necessary to self-preservation in the period of

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6. Hapsburg (German spelling Habsburg). The original castle with this name is in Switzerland (about 20 miles northwest of Zurich). Habsburg is a corruption of Habichtsburg (hoak-burgh).

7. The Swiss Mittelland (midland) is the most populated part of Switzerland lying between the Jura mountains and the Alps, the Lake of Constance and the Lake of Geneva.

8. See Appendix.

the Interregnum, when the rising nobility was using the opportunity of the weakened imperial authority to enlarge their power at the expense of the helpless. It is, however, interesting to note that the league of 1291 was concluded a few weeks after the assassination of Rudolf von Hapsburg, who, as senior member of his family, had been most successful in bringing all the vacant heritages of the Swiss regions under his control, and as king of Germany had been able to end anarchy in Germany. His death seemed to presage a second lawless period. As a king Rudolf von Hapsburg did not touch the rights of the Forest Cantons; but there were good prospects that he could appropriate them in a formally correct way. There was an excellent opportunity for bringing Austria into his family, and both transactions could not be dealt with at the same time. The shifting of the Hapsburg interest to the east is an important factor in the history of Swiss emancipation.[9]

In the eyes of the Hapsburgs the Swiss league was an impertinence. By what right did these peasants conclude such a pact? At that time no right existed but the feudal right, and even if the name Hapsburg was not mentioned in the document it was obviously directed against them. Such an act should be punished, and this could be done by blockade, in

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9. The feudal lords of Austria had died out, and the fief should have gone back to the German crown for redistribution within a year. Ottokar of Bohemia had appropriated the fief and Rudolf as German feudal lord claimed the rights of the crown. However he had to enforce his rights by arms. Ottokar was defeated, Austria reverted to the crown, and the new lord of Austria was Rudolf's son.

barring the way of the Eidgenossen[10] to the markets of Lucerne and Zurich. If this did not bring them to their knees, a punitive expedition would be launched against them as soon as the Hapsburgs had their hands free. The situation of the Eidgenossenschaft[10] in its beginning was not unsimilar to the situation Switzerland is in today.

Conservative and correct as the Bundesbrief of 1291 may sound today, it was an act of reckless daring and the Eidgenossen were perfectly conscious of this. What they sought was something which we today had taken for granted until the totalitarian countries made their claims. The Swiss wanted to be masters of their own valleys. This did not mean that existing rights, even of feudal lords outside their valleys, were not to be respected, but such rights should not give formal justification for arbitrary actions. In their pact of mutual assistance the Eidgenossen foresaw all the administrative needs for keeping the simple life in their valleys in order and so concluded an agreement of historic importance.

While the feudalistic social order classified the population according to castes, at the market everybody met and economic administrative questions were settled in community meetings. Having grown accustomed to solving problems of the

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10. Eidgenossen - Eidgenossenschaft. The name Switzerland (Schweiz) came into use only at the end of the fifteenth century. In order to distinguish the old structure of Switzerland from the modern confederation, the original terms in German, Eidgenosse (comrade-by-oath) and Eidgenossenschaft, designating the old Swiss Confederacy previous to 1798, are used in this text.

market in this way, it was but one step further to discuss questions of security and protection in lawless times. In a most natural way a political structure, based on the relation of man to man, came into being. It was the dawning of a new social order.

Convinced of the rightfulness of such a defensive alliance, strengthened by the hard life in the mountains, and alert to danger through the intuitive scent of the Alpine hunter, they prepared against possible aggression from without. They knew that everything was at stake, but they felt the righteousness of their cause. This was the spirit in which the early Eidgenossen fought their fight of preservation.

The Hapsburgs organized a punitive expedition in 1315. By making good use of their terrain the Eidgenossen gave them a catastrophic defeat and many a neighboring nobleman who would have liked to see the subordination of the Eidgenossen as Hapsburg vassals, met their death on the battlefield.

The extinction of the greater part of the country nobility is a factor of importance to the expansion of the Eidgenossenschaft which is easily overlooked. The House of Hapsburg had already been successful in inheriting a large part of present Switzerland. Its defeat by the Eidgenossen in this territory gave the new victors the excellent opportunity to get hold of lordless territory, abolish serfdom, and establish a democratic order in the country.

In the Swiss lowlands there were some important cities,

which were fighting for their existence against the nobility, and they were glad to join the Eidgenossenschaft. These cities, too, had to defend themselves against the House of Hapsburg. Lucerne was a Hapsburgian city and her joining the league actually was a rebellious act. Zurich, however, was a freie Reichsstadt,[11] just as Uri and Schwyz were freie Reichsländer.[11] Zurich was under the same threat as the Eidgenossen and their joining in an alliance was compelled by the same enemy. For a city to join in an alliance with the inhabitants of a rural district was, on account of social prejudices, another extraordinary act for that time. But in danger the impossible becomes possible. Zurich needed the backing of the Eidgenossenschaft and the Eidgenossenschaft needed expansion in order to be saved from the effects of the blockade, and in the middle of the fourteenth century the new alliance bore its fruits in a successful stand against a Hapsburg assault.

Bern's joining the league in 1353 brought an important stronghold in the west. While Zurich was a very old city, Bern had been founded only in 1191 by the last Duke of Zähringen. Through the expiration of that family Bern soon became a freie Reichsstadt, and being situated on the borderline between Savoyard and Hapsburgian interests, she had an excellent opportunity to bring the territories about her under her

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11. See footnote 5 of this chapter.

domination. The counterattack of the country nobility was successfully repulsed with the aid of the Eidgenossen in 1339. Although the Hapsburgs had not yet renounced their rights to their home territories, the Forest Cantons together with three powerful cities were now masters of the main parts of what was later to be known as Switzerland.

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In a well-prepared campaign in the eighties of the fourteenth century the Hapsburgs again threatened the existence of the young Eidgenossenschaft. In the battle of Sempach, where Winkelried is supposed to have died his heroic death, and two years later near Nafels, the Austrians - as the Hapsburgs were more and more called - received a serious setback. Some decades later the Council of Constance invited the Eidgenossen to take possession of the Aargau, the homeland of the Hapsburgs, as punishment of a banned Hapsburg prince.

This event is of special interest because the Eidgenossen took the new territory into a joint custody. The Eidgenossenschaft was a bundle of loose alliances, and only the Bundesbrief signed by the three original Forest Cantons gave the character of a federation. The ties to the newcomer cantons were individual contracts with the original Eidgenossenschaft and no two of these contracts were exactly alike. There were only two contracts which had application for the whole territory of the Eidgenossenschaft, the first being the Pfaffenbrief

of 1370, banning canonical jurisdiction within its territory, and the Sempacherbrief of 1393, a military ordinance which remained in force till 1798.

These documents and the common bailiwicks were the only ties which held the whole bundle of states together. The common bailiwicks were the apprenticeship for common administration. The cantons took turns in delegating a bailiff, and the Diet, which had no legal rights, had the common bailiwicks as their main subject of discussion. A system of states such as the Eidgenossenschaft represented, has its chief problem in the balance between centralism and particularism. So far the centralistic tendency had been very little developed, and in the later Middle Ages where much more emphasis was given to local than to national interest, such a loose bundle of alliances could persist. But since that time the emphasis had been constantly moving towards more centralization and it was an important problem of the Eidgenossenschaft whether it could keep pace with the requirements of the time. The relation between centralism and federalism - as the Swiss kind of particularism is called - is of particular interest in our study. Swiss history shows that whenever this balance was disturbed, the Eidgenossenschaft was in danger.

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This was the case in the crisis of 1481 in which the

hermit Nicolas von der Flue was able at the last minute to prevent a civil war. The continuous military success of the Eidgenossenschaft had brought her in the middle of the fifteenth century to more than local importance. While an armed conflict between Zurich and the Forest Cantons was going on, the Hapsburgs once more saw a chance of winning back their lost territory by engaging a French army to break into Switzerland. A Swiss vanguard opposed them near Basel with such defiance of death that they preferred not to get in touch with the bulk of the Swiss fighters. This was the last strike of the Austrians against the Eidgenossen. A time was coming when the Swiss fighter saw he would be out of a job. A new era was beginning where fighting was no more an absolute necessity for the Swiss. The Swiss warrior could hire out, and the Eidgenossenschaft could be used for straightening out conflicts which were no more strictly speaking a necessity for the preservation of the country.

The first war of this kind was the Burgundian War. The Dukes of Burgundy had become very powerful princes and this was as much a danger for the French crown as for the Hapsburg dynasty. At the same time Bern would have liked to expand her territory to the west. By encouraging the Swiss to take up arms against Charles the Bold of Burgundy, the Hapsburgs could at least rid themselves of one dangerous enemy, and Louis XI of France could only gain, too, through such a war. To take up arms against Burgundy was reckless, but the

Eidgenossen under the leadership of Bern brought the war to a successful end. Enormous riches came into their hands and suddenly the Swiss had become a European military power. The rural cantons felt that they had come short in the distribution of the booty and Bern wanted to introduce her allies, Solothurn and Freiburg, who had participated in the Burgundian War, into the Eidgenossenschaft. This brought about a serious conflict. The rural Forest Cantons had founded the Eidgenossenschaft. There was a natural tendency for the cities to monopolize the administration of the whole system and to increase their number. Having gotten rid of the Hapsburgs, they did not want to become subjects of the cities. The balance of the system was at stake. The increased importance of the Eidgenossenschaft required more centralization, but this could only take place at the expense of the founder cantons. The delegates were meeting at Stans in Unterwalden and were about to leave without having reached an agreement, when Nicolas von der Flue submitted a plan which satisfied everyone and the situation was saved. The Stanser Verkommnis, as this contract is called, is a remarkable document in the history of democracy. It saved the life of the Eidgenossenschaft and brought about a cohesion which was necessary in view of the threats which followed.

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In 1495 at the Diet of Worms the new Reichsreform was worked out and all parts of the Reich were demanded to conform

to the new system of administration. This actually meant that the increased power of the local dynasties, which had its beginning in the Interregnum, had come to a conclusion, while the imperial crown had faded away to a shadow. The Eidgenossenschaft was invited to participate in the new German order in which the local lords were masters. From the start of this development the Eidgenossenschaft had fought out its own way and had been building up its democratic order. Therefore, to submit to the Reichsreform was impossible, and the Swiss refusal cost them another war, the war in which the name Schweizer was for the first time applied to the whole country as a nickname. Once again the Eidgenossenschaft was victorious and the year 1499 marks the actual liberation of Switzerland from Germany, though its legal confirmation was given only in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Thus for almost 450 years Switzerland has led a distinctly independent existence from Germany.

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As soon as the war with Germany was over, the Swiss launched into a new adventure, the Italian Campaign. Cardinal Mathias Schinner, a Walliser,[12] drew the Eidgenossen into the conflict between France and the Pope. Already in earlier periods

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12. Wallis or Valais was at that time an associate member (zugewandter Ort) of the Eidgenossenschaft. Beside the full members there were a number of such associate members with no vote in the Diet.

the Swiss - the canton of Uri in particular - had been anxious to gain control of the southern slope of the St. Gotthard Pass, which originally belonged to the Duchy of Milan. So a call across the Alps was nothing new for the Swiss and "the country where the lemons blossom"[13] had great attraction for the Swiss. This Italian engagement promised to be a lucrative affair like the Burgundian War. But even less than that war, the Italian Campaign had any ethical idea back of it. War had become business for the Swiss and the moral decadence which was in the air in the period before the Reformation was strongly felt in Switzerland as elsewhere. Nevertheless, in Italy the Swiss were more successful than ever. They even became overlords of Lombardy for a short time and when finally the Eidgenossen were defeated in the battle of Marignano, they undertook an honorable retreat.

Many Swiss had felt uncomfortable about the Italian campaign. They felt that the country was plunging into a sphere of action which was not its own. The Swiss were excellent warriors, but they were no diplomats or strategists of great style. Many a Swiss was glad that the battle of Marignano gave a good occasion for retreating with honor from offensive warfare. They would rather have the Swiss fight in foreign armies than to wage war at their own risk.

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13. "Das Land wo die Zitronen bluh'n." (Italy).

Mercenary service had become a very important economic factor for Switzerland. The hard life in the mountains gave excellent opportunity to raise a strong generation, but the poor vegetation did not yield enough to feed big families. The cantonal governments had contracts with foreign monarchs - the King of France in particular - by which foreign contractors were allowed to hire troops in their territory, the leading politicians receiving pensions from these princes. Such a soldier-agency-system was of course felt to be ethically unsound, and returning mercenaries, who had not learned the best manners in warfare, became a great problem. It was difficult to convert them to any solid work within the country.

Even if after the Italian Campaign there was no particular political friction, the low moral standard was a great danger to the country, and it was felt that only something drastic could forestall disaster.

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This drastic happening was the Reformation. In 1521 Ulrich Zwingli began to preach the Bible from the pulpit of the Grossmünster Church at Zurich. He preached against the immoral living, against the mercenary system, against the pensions, and upheld the Bible as the source of sound direction for a purified life. He himself had taken part in the Italian Campaigns as a chaplain. He was a son of the mountains and

in the mountains he had begun his clerical career. But at the same time he was a humanist, a graduate of the humanistic university of Vienna. Studies of the sources had convinced him of the discrepancy between the teachings of the Bible and those of the Church. He realized that the Catholic Church was no more an adequate guide for the moral life of the country, and he called for a Reformation. His reformation was not only religious and theological, as it was for Luther, but it was the ethical and political criterion which was in the foreground of Zwingli's thinking. Being of about the same age as Luther he was acquainted with his early polemic writings and they reaffirmed him in his own views. On the whole, however, Zwingli's development was independent of Luther.

Zwingli was a political and practical thinker. He was concerned with liberating the country from the guidance of the Catholic Church, and in the Bible he found the remedy for the corrupt social conditions. He wanted to reform the whole of Switzerland, realizing that the new faith would need safe political anchor in order to stand against organized conservative resistance. He was even ready to use the sword in order to accomplish this purpose, and his aggressive attitude, particularly in later years, set him at variance with the altruistic spirit which was one of the hidden reasons for the balance within the Eidgenossenschaft.

First Zurich fought the fight for the Reformation alone. We have to pay tribute to the courage of the citizenry of Zurich to have allowed Zwingli to act, and to set the Polis

of Zurich in opposition to all her neighbors and the traditional religion of the time. Basel and Schaffhausen - who had joined the Eidgenossenschaft after her emancipation from the Reich - as well as Bern, followed. Bern's acceptance of the new faith in particular was important on account of the size of its territory. But the original cantons and Lucerne refused. This split the Eidgenossenschaft into two parts and led to a number of confessional civil wars, of which the last one was as recent as 1847.

Zwingli's rush for a unified protestant Eidgenossenschaft failed. The Swiss who had resisted aggression from without were not to be driven into decisions concerning their faith. Loyalty to the traditional faith was not something to be dropped for mere expediency. Both parties of the Eidgenossenschaft therefore had good grounds for their standpoints, and on both sides it was generally felt that a matter of the heart should not imperil the comradeship which had prevailed for so many centuries and in so many battles.

Of course not at all times was the attitude of the Catholic towards the Protestant Eidgenossen as altruistic as that. They were not uninfluenced from abroad, and this at times led to unhappy persecutions. There was no freedom of faith. A canton was either Catholic or Protestant, and this divided the Eidgenossenschaft into two distinct parts. In the early religious civil wars it happened that the Catholics were repeatedly the victors, although they were in the minor-

ity. And at the Diet, where at that time each full member canton had one voice, the Catholics had the majority.[14]

This was a humiliating state of affairs for the Protestants, but it was a protection in disguise. Switzerland was surrounded by Catholic great powers. Through the abolition of the Burgundian empire France had become a neighbor of the Eidgenossenschaft. In the north and the east Austrian Hapsburg covered the scene and in upper Italy Spanish Hapsburg was ruler. The Swiss Protestants had every interest to keep quiet and not attract attention which might have brought on them the same fate that the Bohemian and Austrian Protestants suffered. It was largely due to the fact that Switzerland was an important reservoir of mercenaries that the country itself was left in peace; the Swiss soldier was fighting for the freedom of his country abroad. However, the enormously important strategic position of Switzerland was also generally realized and it was of general interest that its neutrality be observed.

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We have so far given no consideration to the Reformation of French-speaking Switzerland, and Geneva in particular. These important events in western Switzerland were a particular concern of the city of Bern in which the Eidgenossenschaft was anxious not to be involved.

The Burgundian War was already an indication of Bern's

14. (P Protestant, C Catholic) Zurich P, Bern P, Lucern C,

designs of expansion towards the west. The jealousy of the confederate Eidgenossen and the crisis in the Eidgenossenschaft at the time of the Stanser Verkommnis prevented Bern from seizing its most important booty of that war. Bern's conversion to the Protestant faith again brought up the question of invading the territory between the Jura mountains and the Lake of Geneva. While Zwingli had been unsuccessful in trying to convert the whole of the Eidgenossenschaft in order to provide a sufficiently safe political basis for the defense of the new faith, Bern undertook such an enlargement of territory at her own risk.

The immediate occasion for this undertaking was the struggle of Geneva with the Dukes of Savoy. Geneva had been a free city and at the same time the seat of a bishop. It was the design of the House of Savoy to bring Geneva under their control and make her the capital of their territory.[15] Geneva, unwilling to lose her freedom, made alliances with Freiburg and Bern, but through the Reformation the ties with Catholic Freiburg were lost. It was as a campaign of assistance that Bern invaded Vaud, the fertile country north of the Lake of Geneva, which at that time still belonged to Savoy. But the Bernese invasion did not stop there. The upper part of Savoy

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Uri C, Schwyz C, Unterwalden C, Glarus both (majority P), Zug C, Freiburg C, Solothurn C, Basel P, Schaffhausen P, Appenzell both (majority P).

15. As long as the Canton of Vaud (Waadt), north of the Lake of Geneva, was Savoyard territory, Geneva had a central position within the territories held by the House of Savoy.

on the south bank of the Lake was taken as well. It was only because of the Eidgenossenschaft's refusal of assistance that Bern had to give up the occupation of the south bank of the Lake of Geneva.

However, Bern's protection of the Geneva Reformation was of immense historical importance. It was under Bern's protection that Calvin was able to carry on his activity, so significant to the world, though his influence on Protestant Switzerland was limited. Bern followed the teachings of Zwingli, and Calvin's doctrine, as far as Switzerland was concerned, remained restricted to the city of Geneva.

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Up to the time of Bern's conquest of Vaud there had not been any linguistic problems for Switzerland. The whole Eidgenossenschaft had been a system of contracts among German-speaking people, although the Swiss dialect deviates substantially from high German. Freiburg alone governed over territory which was mainly French-speaking, but with its admittance to the Eidgenossenschaft German was made her official language. The population of the subject valleys south of the St. Gotthard spoke an Italian dialect, but they had no voice in Swiss political affairs and their difference in language did not create any problem. Consequently, the conquest of a wealthy and fertile country like Vaud introduced a new issue, but the Bernese were wise enough to accept French as the official language for

their newly acquired territory. Only the new faith brought a cultural change in Vaud and for the Reformation native reformers like Farel preached the new faith. The conversion of Vaud really wan an important asset for the country. It gave the main part of French-speaking Switzerland its outstanding importance as the only compact Protestant territory of Latin culture.

Although the 262 years during which Vaud was under Bernese domination did not pass without frictions, the language was not one of their causes. It was fashionable for patrician Bernese families to speak French among themselves and many of the young aristocrats received their military training in the army of the French king, and brought home French culture and taste. The German Swiss did not resist French influence. He even liked the contact with the Welschland - as the Latin part of Switzerland is still called.

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With the dawning of the period of absolute monarchy a parallel development took place in Switzerland. But of course it could not be a monarchic form of government. It was aristocratic. Aristocratic administration was most strongly developed in Bern, the city which had to administer the biggest territory. But if after the happenings in 1798 the Bernese patricians were called oligarchs, this term does not do justice to the actual character of their administration. Bernese administration was a masterpiece of administration

and the large, old farmhouses in Bernese territory still bear witness of this, for only in a well administered country can the peasantry grow wealthy.

Although the governmental rights in the city of Bern were limited to a number of patrician families, these governmental rights were really used for the best interests of the country. It was a parsimonious and wise regime and it is a tribute to that regime that a city without important industry but with a flourishing agriculture could accummulate so much wealth as Bern did, so that in 1798 it was one of the richest cities of Europe.

But according to the time, social life was not free. Press and social life were under a sharp governmental censorship, but where was this not the case in those days? On the whole Switzerland was much more liberal than other European countries and many a Huguenot,[16] persecuted in France, found refuge and security in Switzerland.

In cities like Zurich membership in a guild was necessary to qualify one for a government position. Zurich never had to administer so much territory as Bern, but as a cultural center it was more important. From the whole Protestant world students came to Geneva and Zurich for their theological studies, and Basel with its old university was keen to uphold

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16. Huguenot is a corruption of Eidgenoss. Because the French Protestants had their headquarters in Geneva, they acquired this nickname which is difficult for French-speaking people to pronounce. Hence its corruption.

its humanistic tradition. In these cities there was a severe moral spirit which could perhaps be compared to that of Boston, Massachusetts, under the leadership of her theological dynasties.

Even in the original rural cantons an aristocratic tendency prevailed. Governmental affairs were in the hands of the best families of these cantons, which had won their prosperity in foreign military service and out of military pensions. The mercenary system which Zwingli had fought continued in most cantons.

Just as everywhere else in Europe tradition became very important, and more and more throughout the whole Eidgenossenschaft the population was split into two classes, the rulers and the ruled. In city cantons the rural part of the population had but few rights in comparison to the citizenry.

These conditions, while in line with the tradition of the time, were not in accordance with the basic principles of the Eidgenossenschaft, and they caused conflict. Switzerland had her peasant war shortly after the termination of the Thirty Years' War, from which she had been spared like a patch of quiet water in the midst of ocean streams. The Swiss peasants had gotten excellent prices for their products during the war and were unprepared for post-war deflation. The Thirty Years' War had greatly changed social life, and more centralization in governmental affairs was the order of the

day. The aristocratic tendency in the country was the attempt to solve the problem of general centralization with inadequate means. The Middle Ages had had its political foundation in the small political district. Now the national political structure was growing, and just as today the nations have to delegate special powers to their governments in order to meet the needs of the time, so the governments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tried to solve their problems through coercion and self-assumed power. The Swiss peasant failed in his struggle against this development, and his position grew worse instead of better.

Although the individual cantons underwent these social changes, the system of the Eidgenossenschaft scarcely changed at all. Each of the thirteen full members in the Diet had one voice, and the delegates voted according to instruction, a system which condemned the Diet to practical incapacity. Beside the full members, however, there were the associate members, whom those abroad considered a part of the Eidgenossenschaft, although they had no voice in the Diet. In such a Diet where only unanimous agreement gave legal authority and where each canton was anxious to lose none of its old rights, no measure for bringing the Eidgenossenschaft up to date could pass. It was only in the last year of the Thirty Years' War that a small defensive military force could be formed for the defense of the country. And it seems ridiculous that, when in 1798 French armies attacked Switzerland, the old military ordinance

of 1393 - the Sempacherbrief - was still in force, but it is not astonishing under such conditions.

Because in the years after the Reformation the Protestant cantons had been defeated by the Catholics and because they were in the minority in the Diet, powerful Bern, Zurich, Glarus, Basel and Schaffhausen had to accept the predominance of the much less powerful Catholic cantons.[17] It was only at the beginning of the eighteenth century that this condition changed and for some hundred years the confessional problem of Switzerland lost its importance.

Although the political problem of the Eidgenossenschaft was not solved and the aristocratic governments were anxiously trying to preserve their assumed powers, social life in Switzerland greatly changed under the influence of the movement of enlightenment, finding its way into Switzerland through France. Abroad Switzerland was greatly praised as the country where a prince could walk arm in arm with a peasant and discuss political problems.[18] It was a country which had not seen a real war for centuries. Export industries were making a start, and for the oppressed peoples of Europe Switzerland seemed to be paradise on earth.

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17. See footnote 14 of this chapter.

18. In 1760 the Helvetische Gesellschaft, a progressive patriotic society, was founded and among its members was Duke Louis Eugene of Wurttemberg. At a meeting at Schinznach Bad he was seen arm in arm with a peasant of the canton of Zurich - rather an unusual appearance for the eighteenth century.

But the progressive and capable Swiss middle class, which under the aristocratic order had insufficient rights, saw the approach of a crisis, unless the structure of Switzerland could be modernized.

This crisis came when Napoleon was preparing his Egyptian campaign and was in need of funds. One of the main reasons why Switzerland had been left in peace from outside aggression was the poverty of its natural resources. Bernese economy had filled the vaults of its city hall with gold, and beside public treasure there were many well-to-do private citizens in Switzerland.

The French assault on Switzerland was a calamity. Calculating on Switzerland's weakest point - lack of unity - the French attained their objective very easily. The Swiss would have been in a position to oppose the French with an equally powerful army, but French ruse found the way around serious fighting. Only the little canton of Nidwalden[19] whose fathers had helped to sign the Bundesbrief put up a fierce resistance and to some extent saved the heroic reputation of the old Swiss.

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19. Three of the Swiss cantons are split into two parts: Basel-Stadt and Basel-Land, Appenzell Inner-Rhoden (Catholic) and Ausser-Rhoden (Protestant), and Nid- and Obwalden which together form Unterwalden. In each case the two parts have completely separate administrations, but today when each canton has two representativex in the States Council (equivalent to the United States Senate), the Half-Cantons have but one representative. Unterwalden was separated into two parts prior to 1291 and at first only Nidwalden joined the Eidgenossenschaft. In Appenzell the separation was a cause of the Reformation, while the two Basels separated only in 1833.

After the French had carried away whatever was portable, Napoleon dictated for Switzerland a centralistic republic with nineteen cantons, after the pattern of the French *departements*, largely disregarding traditional borders. However, this sytem did not work at all. It was an early attempt to make practical a theory, and although liberal Swiss statesmen put their best efforts into this new political structure, the only thing solid about this *Helvetic Republic* was the French arms defending it. France's invasion of the strategically important alpine Republic also brought her enemies into the country. Switzerland became an international battleground, and according to military success the organizations of the *Helvetic Republic* were upheld or fell.

Napoleon, who had a special interest in Switzerland because of her ancient heroism, saw at length that a centralistic republic was an impossibility for Switzerland. He ordered a number of leading Swiss politicians to Paris and constituted a new political order, the *Mediation*, something between the old and new order.[20] Of course the Swiss considered the new constitution an improvement over the *Helvetic Republic*, but it also improved Napoleon's position by weakening Switzerland through reestablishing some of the basis of

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20. Napoleon had an amazingly detailed knowledge of Switzerland. The constitutions which he worked out for Switzerland are not the makeshifts of an ignorant outsider, and this makes their study very interesting.

its former disunity. Switzerland's new industries suffered heavily under Napoleon's continental blockade and the country had to take its orders from an arbitrary despot, losing one part of its territory after another and being under the constant threat of incorporation in the French Empire.

But when 1815, the year of liberation, came, it became apparent how disorganized the country was. The reactionary governmental circles of course wanted a reconstitution of the old Eidgenossenschaft including the subject territories. The voice of the liberal elements carried no weight and the cowardly surrender of the country to the Napoleonic armies had cost it its old reputation. Had the Congress of Vienna not refused to acknowledge Switzerland in its old structure, the old Eidgenossenschaft would have been reestablished. Even so the reactionary elements were powerful enough to reestablish an outmoded order, and for the next fifteen years Switzerland as an indefinable antithesis to the principle of monarchy was one of the despised countries of Europe.

But in the meantime the good elements of the country again came to life. The people had breathed the liberalism of the nineteenth century and the stiff, outmoded regime of the reactionaries was exposed in all its weaknesses. The nineteenth century with its industrial advances demanded a new political structure. In one canton after another the liberal party came to the top and liberal constitutions were introduced, and the cantons with liberal constitutions formed

an alliance among themselves. Of course this led to a counter-alliance - the Sonderbund - of the conservative cantons, and the cleavage of the Confederation into two parties became more and more pronounced. The great importance which religious sentiments played in those times of romanticism revived the confessional controversy. The catholic cantons tended to conservatism, while the Protestants mostly advocated liberalism. More and more the controversy between centralism and advocacy of a new federal constitution on the one hand and conservative and catholic reaction on the other turned into a violent conflict. The Catholics felt themselves under attack, and at last the tension led to a civil war - the Sonderbundskrieg, 1847 - in which the great powers of Europe felt their own interests at stake.

Fortunately, before any foreign power had time to meddle in Swiss internal affairs, General Dufour's[21] excellent strategy led the federal army into a quick combat with the seven upstart members of the Sonderbund, and mild and brotherly treatment of the defeated compatriots opened the way to the transformation of the old Eidgenossenschaft into the modern Swiss Confederation. In a very short time the new constitution, which created a modern prosperous Switzerland could be introduced and this constitution, revised in 1874, is still in force.

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21. General Henri Dufour is the Swiss General Grant. He distinguished himself not only as an excellent strategist, but also by his character. Dufour worked out the first Swiss topographical atlas. He was also president of the International Red Cross Committee.

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With the growing strength of the liberal element in Switzerland since 1830 self-confidence grew and little by little the good reputation of Switzerland was rehabilitated, but with it also came the fear of the reactionary princes of Europe. We can well imagine that a liberal Switzerland was very much opposed to the plans of Prince Metternich. The quick abolition of the Sonderbund gave the signal for the February Revolution in France and the upheaval in Germany and elsewhere. The Swiss Confederation with its new constitution was a challenge. But Switzerland had found her balance again. The new constitution for which the constitution of the United States of America had been a pattern was abreast of the times and after a number of years, during which external interference was immanent, the country made rapid strides forward. Economic barriers between cantons had been abolished, schemes which had to be executed on a federal basis could find realization, and the citizen learned to identify himself as Swiss instead of regarding his canton as his fatherland. Even the reactionary elements, in seeing the enormous advantages of the new constitution, forsook their old standpoint and nothing seemed any longer to stand in the way of a prosperous, modern Switzerland.

The revision of the constitution in 1874 introduced the referendum and initiative for federal laws. Thus, while the

constitution of 1848 delegates great power to the federal authorities and parliament, the referendum and initiative gave the people the last word in legislative matters, and made them the actual sovereign of the country.

The Swiss is accustomed to take responsibility for the political affairs of his country. This is seen not so much in a regular good attendance at the pools, as in the exercise of a check on the parliament and the executive in important matters. A study of such instances will show that the ordinary people have good judgment in such important issues and are able to administer their own political affairs.

The Swiss people has had the exceptional advantage to grow through a process of many centuries to political maturity. This long process from the later Middle Ages up to the present has made possible the unification of a heterogeneous people with sufficient cohesion to hold together today when the country is besieged as it was in the early days of its existence. In World War I the sympathies of the different linguistic groups were still divided. World events since 1919 have forged the Swiss into one bloc, and today when democracy, the very principle of the Swiss Confederation, is at stake, the country is firmly united as one nation.

Of course a mere survey of the political history of the country does not explain the deepest reasons for this growth, but such an outline will greatly facilitate the understanding of the thought of the country, to which we will turn in our next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

SWISS THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

In the last chapter we have given a brief outline of Swiss political history and it will be the purpose of this chapter to study the mental background of the country's development. A division of the treatment of Swiss democracy into two chapters has the advantage of separating that part which to a large extent represents a personal thesis from the part which contains generally accepted results of historic research. However, it must be admitted that when a complicated and extensive material, of which the standard treatments are works of several volumes, are condensed into one chapter, the best intentions to be as objective as possible may be inadequate. Only the most important developments can be mentioned, and the decision concerning what is important is based on personal judgment.

Any one describing the structure of his own country and never having had reason to distrust its democratic order is very likely to gather all the arguments in favor of a preconceived estimate of his country. Comparing Swiss democracy to the Republic of Plato, the temptation is very great to be sure at the outset which side will suffer by comparison, and to squeeze historical facts like a sausage into the shape we

want.

In full consideration of all the mischief which is being done with history, we cannot dispense with it for the study of our subject. However, if we study the mentality underlying such an historical development, we may find a constitutive idea, a central viewpoint which will enable us to understand the relations of all the historical phenomena.

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The question of what is back of the Swiss emancipation from the Reich seems particularly pertinent to this study, because a portion of a political structure such as the Holy Roman Empire does not break off from the whole without definite reason. The unity of Germany with Italy, the Kingdom of Arles, and other non-German-speaking countries, was artificial. There was no real cohesion between these countries. The territory of the original Eidgenossenschaft, on the other hand, was a part of Germany proper, and as we have seen, had derived considerable importance from the opening of the St. Gotthard Pass. How was it that the population of these regions could turn their backs to mother Germania?

This writer holds the opinion that the main reason lay in the mentality of the population. However, it has not been neglected here to draw attention to merely material reasons. A mountainous country is a natural fortress and permits of a defense which would not be possible in the lowlands. The harder

life and poorer vegetation of such a mountainous region, together with the constant danger of natural disasters such as avalanches and floods, produce a hardiness and an endurance not general among people whose living conditions are easier. We have compared the conditions of living in the Alps to the hazards of the American frontier. We may compare them to those of another mountain people of Europe, the Serbs, who for many centuries put up resistance to the Turks and today refuse to submit to the Nazis.

Once the Forest Cantons were able at Morgarten in 1315 to maintain their position, a factor not to be underrated in the continued maintenance of their position was the destruction in the ranks of the country nobility during that battle. This gave Lebensraum to the young Confederation, and the alliance with two important free cities like Zurich and Bern promised the Eidgenossenschaft an independent political growth.

The success of the early Eidgenossen in their defense against the House of Hapsburg might also be interpreted as mere luck. But with the experience of World War II we have learned to understand that the mentality of a country has very much to do with its success in battle. We have described the conditions of the Eidgenossenschaft when it was at its lowest ebb in 1798. Then the country had all the material requisites for resisting. The French attacked with an army of about 40,000 men. The Swiss could easily have formed an army of 40,000 trained soldiers and neither was the artillery lacking. But the proper spirit was not there.

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The attention of the reader has been drawn to the fact that at about the time when the movement of the German Mystics came into being the emancipation of Switzerland began. All phases of the life of the thirteenth century show an awakening of spirit. The justification for traditional authority was questioned and Truth was no longer universally regarded as the monopoly of the Church. It is not at all astonishing that this emancipation of thought took shape politically. People had begun to have confidence in the authority of their own sense of right. It is not surprising that this kind of thinking was quite developed in that region of Switzerland where every man had to be self-reliant in order to survive and where the hardships of life and the closeness to nature actually induced a mystical religiosity. In order to understand this mentality and the feeling of the early Swiss toward the political authority of the Reich the American may draw a parallel with the American frontiersman in his attitude towards the original mother country, England. A self-made man who finds his own way in all his affairs does not find it necessary to accept interference from outside.

It was but one step forward from their market cooperatives to a cooperative political system. The hard life in the mountains had taught them to be individualists and their religious feelings supported their action.

There must have been a perfect balance between religious

feeling and action, otherwise the early Swiss would hardly have run the risks involved in their resistance to the system of the time. There is a warm cordiality and perfect mutual confidence expressed in the Swiss Bundesbrief of 1921;[1] there is something more than just calculation in it, and at the same time we are struck by the wisdom this document reveals. There was a spiritual quality in the mentality of the early Eidgenossen for which cold intellectualism has no measurement. Just as a child needs the love of his mother in order to grow into a harmonious person, so a political structure needs love and sincerity for its growth. Where this exists, even under most adverse conditions and when many mistakes are made, a successful evolution is possible.

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Let us also consider that Switzerland, the oldest existing democracy, grew in a corner of the world where, considering the natural conditions, the chances would seem meager that an independent political structure could develop.

First, there is the racial question. It is hard to tell how many peoples in prehistoric and early historic times had crossed the Alps in order to find better living conditions in Italy or France. Many of them may have left some of their people behind in the Alps, or unsuccessful attempts to immigrate to Italy may have thrown others back into the mountains. In the period of the medieval migration of peoples Switzerland

1. See Appendix.

was settled in the German-speaking part by the Allemans who wiped out the Roman-Celtic culture of the country, while the Burgundians who settled in the French-speaking section, accepted the Latin culture they found there, and all that remains as evidence of a German origin is the names of localities.[2] Although the Swiss German dialects belong to the group of Allemanic speech, there are many non-Allemanic elements in Switzerland speaking a Swiss-German dialect.

While Germany seemed to have the prerequisites for the development of a national state, this is certainly not the case for Switzerland. Here it is hard to find a common denominator for a constitutive idea of a common state, even without the more recent differences of language and denomination. But just because there is no such material common denominator, the only possible basis for growth of a single state is a spiritual one. This basis is the sense for the equality of man.

In the Middle Ages, it is true, there was no doctrine of the equality of man. The constant contact with people of different customs and language, however, must have made it easier for the Swiss to overcome racial prejudices and to learn to esteem men of different types. This faculty, together with a religious practical common sense, can be accepted as sufficient ground for the mental emancipation of Switzerland.

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2. In the canton of Vaud the names of many localities end with -ens, e.g. Sottens, Vuifflens (Wölflingen), pointing to the Allemanic -ingen as in Wölflingen.

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The first steps leading to the emancipation of Switzerland were mainly military actions. The Swiss had to be physically strong enough to protect their new structure, and through such military tests political maturity grew as a consequence of their own efforts. The military capacity of the early Swiss, as we have seen, developed to virtuosity and at the end of the fifteenth century secured the actual separation of their Confederation from the Reich. The Eidgenossenschaft had become a state within a state and finally grew strong enough so that nothing could prevent her from forging her own fate at her own risk.

So far, however, the Eidgenossenschaft had been more or less a cultural blank. Except for the Monastery of St. Gall, slight cultural contributions had come from those regions. It was only with the Reformation that Switzerland began to build up a culture of her own which has a marked distinction from that of the Reich.

Just as the emancipation from the Reich had been an organic development for the country, so was the Swiss Reformation. The first was liberation from the secular overlord, the second from the spiritual overlord. We can therefore understand why the Swiss Reformation is so distinct in character from the German Reformation.

We described the Swiss Reformation in the last chapter largely in its political aspects, as a means of saving the country from moral decadence. The strong political character of the Swiss Reformation shows a marked difference from the

Lutheran movement and, on the other hand, a similarity to the English Reformation under Henry VIII. In Switzerland political affairs were in the hands of the people themselves; in Germany, where the feudalistic order had found a new form in the emancipation of the Landesfürsten, the Reformation was an opportunity for these princes to strengthen their power. Luther saw the Reformation entirely as a religious issue, leaving its political consequences to the Landesfürsten.

Switzerland, on the other hand, had developed a political organization on a cooperative basis. The whole Eidgenossenschaft had a cooperative basis, as the name Eid-Genossenschaft indicates. Switzerland had become a world of its own and the Reformation was to emphasize its specific character. While so far only a mystical religious sense stood back of the emancipation of the country, now Protestant Switzerland had the Bible which confirmed the stand the country had taken thus far. The Bible fully revealed the equality of men as the creatures of God. The Bible gave the Protestant Swiss the spiritual weapon and authority with which he could defend his political standpoint.

This indeed was not true for Catholic Switzerland. But the new interrelation of Protestant and Catholic within the Eidgenossenschaft had begun. Although for the next three hundred years this division was to be an unfortunate weakness, the constant friction of two different standpoints little by little

began to show its positive value. While the Protestants became important for their cultural leadership, the Catholic conservatism was a brake on the car whenever it was about to go too fast. The balance of differing opinions as expressed in a federation gives an equilibrium which an authoritarian state, lacking opposition and criticism, can never have.

The protestant-Catholic partnership in the Eidgenossenschaft was preparing the way for the linguistic partnership which appeared with the Helvetic Republic in 1798. So far the Eidgenossenschaft had had no linguistic problem, for the French- or Italian-speaking parts of the country had so far been either subject countries or associated cantons. When these territories of Latin culture were incorporated into the Eidgenossenschaft with equal rights, the advantage of meeting with people of different culture greatly outweighed the disadvantages. The Swiss had already become accustomed to work together with people of different language. The military service which so many of them did abroad may also have been beneficial in this respect; it had certainly given them the ability to deal with people whose language was different from their own. When the time came that the Eidgenossenschaft was a trilinguistic conglomerate of states, this created no serious problem. Through peaceful evolution the new Eidgenossenschaft - the Swiss Confederation in the modern sense of this name - blossomed into a well balanced confederation despite differences of language.

The great value of giving people of different culture a

chance to work together in one common cause has become more and more evident. While the German Swiss have a stronger tendency toward centralization, the French Swiss guard their local rights even more eagerly than necessary. While the German Swiss is generally more efficient in his work, the French Swiss balances the German Pflichtbewusstsein with a savoir-vivre and esprit. Each profits from the qualities of the other and this gives the Confederation a balance which a coordination of nations promises.

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The equilibrium between centralism and federalism has already been treated in the last chapter in connection with certain phases of Swiss history. We have to come back to it once more for a short treatment of its theoretical aspect.

We said that the relation between these two opposite tendencies in a state in any particular period determines the solidity of its political structure. In the Middle Ages, when a person identified himself with a locality or a valley, an Eidgenossenschaft with a strong emphasis on particularism could quite well exist, but with the general development towards nationalism, the balance between centralism and federalism was bound to alter. We considered this in the discussion of the Stanser Verkommnis of 1481. Switzerland had become a Great Power and needed more cohesion. While the Stanser Verkommnis represents a formal settlement of a growing conflict, the

complete settlement took place with the Swiss retreat from the Italian Campaigns: Switzerland shrank back from her new position. In consideration of the coming Reformation this was the salvation of the Eidgenossenschaft, because split into two parts she could never have played the role of a great power properly.

This retreat, however, initiated the three centuries of political stagnancy out of which Switzerland had to be shaken by the French invasion in 1798. Like the French monarchy, the Eidgenossenschaft was too rigid to adapt itself to the changing thought of the period of Enlightenment. The absolutist political ideas, which in Switzerland found expression in aristocratic regimes, overshadowed the original democratic character of the old Eidgenossenschaft. Instead of moving with the time, the authoritarian governments tried to check the evolving spirit of the period of Enlightenment with coercion. The adjustment of the relation of centralism to federalism did not keep pace with the time and this was actually responsible for the calamity of 1798.

Switzerland's present successful defense is due to the fact that this relation of centralism and federalism has the right balance for the requirements of the present time. Since 1798 Switzerland has had the chance to adapt her political structure to the needs of the modern period. Once the country recovered from the excitement of the Napoleonic period, liberalism could bring about the necessary changes. The country was ready

to absorb outside influences. While the old Eidgenossenschaft with its autochthonous structure can be considered as the thesis in a dialectic process, the Enlightenment with all its by-products, an influence coming from outside, is an antithesis, and the modern Swiss Confederation can be regarded as the synthesis of the two.

However the problem of a structure like Switzerland does not only depend on the right relation of centralism and federalism. The administrative balance has to be taken into account, too.

The present parliamentary system of Switzerland with its bicameral character is an imitation of the American Congress, but the Swiss federal executive is indigenous. The Swiss Cabinet - the Federal Council - is much more like a board of directors of an economic enterprise than an imitation of other governmental executives. It is a committee of seven members which as a whole represents the Swiss people, and the President of the Swiss Confederation is only the chairman for one year of this committee. The members of the Federal Council are at the same time the chiefs of the different governmental departments. There are no governmental crises such as were experienced in the Third French Republic. Although the Swiss Federal Councillors are elected by the Federal Assembly - the two legislative chambers sitting together - they generally remain in office for a good number of years, some for twenty years or more.

The Federal Council in itself represents as far as possible

a balance between the different interests within the Confederation. It is an unwritten law that the three most powerful cantons - Zurich, Bern and Vaud - should always have a Federal Councillor, while the other four seats are held by the remaining cantons. The Latin part of the country is represented by two to three seats, and two to three seats are held by Catholics. So far a party equilibrium does not exist. Although the Federal Councillors are supposed to be above party considerations, they cannot throw overboard the convictions they have gained by participation in one of the parties through which they have made their political career. Since the reorganization of the Confederation in 1848 the Liberal Party has had the leadership. Although radical in the beginning, it has become conservative and has made good friends with the other parties of the Right, particularly with the Catholic-Conservative group, while the Social-Democrats are waiting impatiently for their representation on the Federal Council. Although it is more and more recognized that the Socialists should be represented, in case of a vacancy not only party affiliation, but religious denomination, cantonal citizenship, language, and of course personal qualities have their weight in the choice of a candidate, and thus far no Socialist candidate has won election to the Federal Council.

Such a system has the unfortunate drawback that the personal qualifications of a candidate are not the only prerequisites for a seat in the highest executive, and a state of equilibrium

is valued more than the excellency of a person. Before 1939 the opinion was often heard in Switzerland that the Swiss people deserved a stronger Federal government than they had. Of course the expression of criticism and discontent is a phenomenon of democracy, but if a small democracy has to make its stand against the overwhelming power of aggressive neighbors like Germany and Italy, an effective government becomes an absolute requirement. The peak of democratic evolution is attainment of such a strong and efficient government, which, when needs be, can act as quickly as an arbitrary dictator. But while in the latter case coercion is the basis, in a democracy the government has the support of the people behind it. This is only possible in a country of perfect political balance, where the individual citizens know not only their rights but also their duties toward the whole country. The absolutely unified government, whose members have the complete confidence of the people, is of course the ideal. Switzerland has had the benefit of a long evolution to polish her political structure and is perhaps nearer to this ideal than most other countries, but it would be definitely wrong to think that Switzerland has reached an ideal political solution. The value of Swiss political life is the example it presents, indicating the direction in which democracy in general has to evolve further.

To have the responsibility of the highest executive divided among seven members is a great advantage in a time when

administration has become so complicated that the whole responsibility can scarcely be carried by one person. We have compared the Swiss Federal Council with a board of directors, whose perpetuity is not forfeited, even though the individual members change. This gives government a stability which, particularly in wartime, is to highly appreciated. The documents of the Swiss Federal Council during this war will be a very interesting study of the gains in effectiveness made by the highest Swiss executive under the present extremely difficult circumstances. This will not only be of interest for the domestic scientist, but for the student of democracy in general.

This system of cooperation, as expressed in the Swiss Federal Council, has its roots in the Middle Ages. We have seen that the old Eidgenossenschaft grew out of a market cooperative system. An economic administrative system was applied to politics. The commonly administered bailiwicks were an apprenticeship in cooperative government. The Swiss Diet came into being as a forum for discussing the problems of the common bailiwicks and this Diet became the forerunner of the modern Swiss parliament. Because there is such an old administrative tradition, the Swiss Federal Council as a modern simplified version of the old Diet has a peculiar structure, different from the executive of any other country.

In a country where the individual citizen is accustomed to have his word in political matters, a representative

institution like the bicameral parliament, which was an article of importation, had to be adjusted to the mentality of the Swiss. Parliaments err and the citizen wants to be protected against unwise legislation. This was the main reason for the revision in 1874 of the Swiss Constitution of 1848, introducing the referendum and initiative, which give the people an active role in legislation. It is a great satisfaction for the defender of the equal rights of man to see that the Swiss people are capable of making good use of these extraordinary rights, particularly of the referendum. In it more than in anything else the political freedom of the Swiss people is expressed, and if the Swiss are considered to be a politically mature people, it is less because of unfailing performance of their electoral duties than on account of the good use made of the referendum.

The demand of democracy is self-control.[3] Just as we expect the individual to be self-controlled and coherent, we must ask this of his society. Without giving the individual an opportunity to express his opinion on important governmental acts a self-control of society is not possible and Swiss experience demonstrates the judgment which even simple men have concerning what is best for their society.

We should not leave the discussion of the political aspect of Swiss democracy without taking into account the problem of

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3. Hebler, EPF, 122.

neutrality. Today when the whole world is aflame over the controversy of democratic political principle versus totalitarianism, neutrality appears to be an inconsistency. However a glance at the map of Europe and consideration of what would happen if Switzerland were not to maintain a state of neutrality may easily answer such a question.

However, Swiss neutrality is not a measure of temporary expediency. It is a policy more than four hundred years old. It has been maintained since the Swiss retired from the Italian Campaign shortly before the Reformation, and was an expression of renunciation of aggressive power politics. In discussing the problem of neutrality, we have to distinguish between a neutrality which has been self-imposed, and a neutrality which has been imposed on a nation by foreign powers, as was the case with Belgium in 1839.

While the neutrality of Switzerland up to modern times had a defensive character, today it provides an internationally recognized peace island and this gives it a new character. For several centuries the big powers agreed to leave Switzerland - occupying one of Europe's most important strategic positions - in the custody of her neutral people and so keep it out of war. It is evident what it means in modern warfare to have a country in the heart of Europe, through which the most urgent international exchange can still go on, by whose government the mutual interests of the belligerent nations can be cared for, and from which

the International Red Cross can operate.

Swiss neutrality has changed from a passive to an active character. It is not weakness but a solid support of international importance.

But even if we may be tempted to consider the earlier passive period of Swiss neutrality as weakness, we should also take into consideration the fact that a new form of state such as the Swiss Confederation represented in past centuries, needed special protection during the earlier periods of its development. Similarly, the Monroe Doctrine was a necessity for the United States of America in its youth, until it grew strong enough to compete in peace and war with the old nations. Comparatively speaking, Switzerland is no longer in the early days of its growth, but we easily forget that even in the last century, surrounded by great monarchic powers, Switzerland was considered a kind of anomaly.[4]

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4. Werner Naef, in an article entitled "Die Schweiz im europaischen Umbruch" in the Neue Schweizer Rundschau, 1941, XI, 674 writes as follows: "Republikanische Staatsform..... hatte im Altertum, in Athen und Rom, ihre klassische Darstellung gefunden. Vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit aber hat nur die Schweiz die republikanische Idee unentwegt festgehalten und durchgehalten. Als dann seit Rousseau, dem amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg, der Französischen Revolution die Republik als erstrebenswertes Ziel neu aufgestellt wurde, gewann die Schweiz beispielhafte Bedeutung. Eine Anomalie im monarchischen Europa, urteilte kritisierend ein deutscher Historiker, Heinrich von Treitschke, Deutsche demokratische Publizisten des 19. Jahrhunderts aber priesen die republikanische Schweiz uber die Massen als Vertreterin des einzig wahren Prinzips aller Politik."

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The cooperative character of Swiss democracy has a social as well as political aspect. It has expression in the general attitude that the whole is more important than the individual, although the individual does not fail to claim his rights as a part of the whole. The character of a cooperative society is that individuals unite in common action and that the action of the whole should benefit each member of the society on equal terms. The slogan "all for one and one for all" is not only an ingredient of speeches at Swiss shooting festivals, but has some real truth in it.

If in times of stress all stand for one and one for all we may praise this as a wonderful achievement, but we have also to be concerned with its cultural aspect. Viewing Switzerland's value to European and Western culture, we may be tempted to believe that her contribution as a cooperative enterprise was greater than the contribution of individual Swiss citizens. Such generalizations are based on individual judgment and therefore should be accepted with due reserve, but this writer sees some justification for interpreting the cooperative character of the Swiss Confederation in the setting of its social life.

Swiss culture cannot be defined materially. Languages are four and dialects are legion. We have considered the differences in other cultural factors such as religion. Through the long,

steady development of their society, during which its different elements could learn to know each other well, through comradeship in battles in earlier times, in important and in small things, the Eidgenossen had grown accustomed to respect each other's rights and persons. And even when the Confederation went through serious crises, it never came to a complete break. Even in early times the attitude between the cantons was not that of German local princes, where each one watched for an opportunity to get hold of a piece of land which belonged to his neighbor. The last controversy over cantonal borders occurred in the middle of the fifteenth century, and this is an important factor in the consolidation of internal Swiss politics.

Although a religious sense parallel to that of the German mystics may be considered as the chief cause of Swiss emancipation, in the Middle Ages the country was quite unimportant culturally, except for the achievements of certain monasteries, St. Gall in particular. Yet the determined will for a freedom of conscience was paving the way not only for material but spiritual evolution. Nevertheless it was not until the Reformation that Switzerland began to go her own way culturally. Until then the Eidgenossenschaft had formally still been a part of Germany and the Rhine was not yet felt as a border.

With the Reformation, however, Swiss cities acquired a new importance. Zurich and Geneva became religious centers and Switzerland had her own Reformation. In Switzerland religious and political thinking were inseparable, in Germany they were

two different things. The Swiss Reformation had its influence on the Anglo-Saxon world. John Knox was a pupil of Calvin, and other Britons went to Zurich for their theological studies. At the time of Erasmus of Rotterdam and of the Holbein family, Basel became an important cultural center and in St. Gall[5] Vadianus, a renowned humanist, was burgomaster.

The Swiss cities developed a self-conscious civic culture. The lack of any princes - except in St. Gall which had its abbot and was an associate member of the Eidgenossenschaft - developed a culture which of necessity was different in thought from that of monarchistic Germany. It was a cooperative culture. Culturally as well as politically, the individual contributor was supporting the whole - in this case mostly the city - and the whole was sustaining the individual, somewhat as in a monastery. Culturally the point of gravitation of the Eidgenossenschaft had definitely passed to the Protestants and the cultural influence of Switzerland on western culture in general has come through the Reformation. Not only were the fruits of Swiss emancipation carried out into the world in the period of the Reformation, but one of the chief agitators for the French Revolution was the citizen of Geneva, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

We find in Rousseau's writings the distinct influence of Swiss tradition as well as of Calvin's teachings. Rousseau

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5. We have to distinguish between the Monastery of St. Gall and the City of St. Gall. At the time of the Reformation the city was a free city and under the leadership of its Burgomaster accepted the Reformation. This, however, had no consequences for the monastery and the territory known as the Abbacy of St. Gall, although the monatery was within the walls of the city.

was greatly influenced by John Locke, who in his Reasonableness of Christianity reveals a standpoint which has much in common with Swiss Protestant religious thought. It is a Christian standpoint which seeks application in society and politics, and the Swiss, like the British, had the opportunity to put their religious convictions into practice.

At the time of Rousseau a less known Swiss had great influence in Prussia. It was Johann Georg Sulzer[6] from Winterthur, whose influence on Kant's Kritik der praktischen Vernunft should not be underestimated. The importance of the contribution of such writers as Rousseau and Sulzer is less the originality of their own thought than the originality of their country. The Swiss emancipation had created a common mental good, which, when it was brought to other countries, had remarkable evolutionary effect. Tsar Alexander I had had the Vaudois, César de la Harpe, as instructor, and Albrecht von Haller[7] with his strong feeling for his country opened the eyes of the world to the beauty of the Alps.

As a most typically Swiss contribution may be mentioned Pestalozzi's educational reform. He who could scarcely write a letter without mistakes in spelling became the educator of the world. He was an educator not of the head but of the heart.

It is significant of the Swiss cultural contribution that

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6. Tumarkin, AJS.

7. Haller, Ged.

it is not a system of philosophy nor a theory, but that it is practical. It is philosophy applied: education. The Swiss political structure is something living, and can only be kept living if the individual who upholds it is living too. Yet it is not a cold intellectual living. There is Gemüt or heart in this life. It is a life which cannot possibly be separated from ethics. It is a life in which ethics has found its normal application. We may find that the Swiss has a tendency to moralize, but very often it is a moralizing through action accomplished and not through words. His is a sober-minded, realistic, and at the same time idealistic attitude toward life. There is room in Switzerland for the best German characteristics, but they are balanced by the Gallic qualities of the western Swiss.

Although at the start Switzerland was an insignificant part of the world, it has become not only the refuge of liberal ideas, but the spirit of freedom of conscience has brought manifold fruits in outstanding cultural achievements. It is an interesting fact that three of the most valuable writers of German language in the last century were Swiss: Gottfried Keller, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and Jeremias Gotthelf. Today Switzerland is the only part of German culture where German tradition remains unspoiled.

Even if the Swiss borders are confines which the Swiss does not want to see underestimated, they are not cultural limits. In normal times Switzerland is in contact with the

cultural life of the neighboring nations as well as with the whole world. Swiss industries and commerce have their ties all over the world, Swiss money has helped to finance many important enterprises at home and abroad, and graduates of Swiss educational institutions are found all over the world.

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While Switzerland has made considerable contributions to the world in art, sciences, crafts and trade, her greatest contribution is perhaps her mere being. The demonstration that a political structure on such a basis is possible and can become efficient is the most important contribution of them all. If Switzerland comes through this war strengthened instead of harmed, not only the Swiss but the whole world will be the beneficiary. That right in the heart of Europe, where one of the craters of the present war is, the oldest democracy could endure, gives hope that a solution on a federal basis will be possible for other parts of Europe. Switzerland's experience seems to indicate that it takes long and painstaking efforts to build up a well balanced federal union. This does not mean that other nations need as much time as Switzerland to find their consolidation. Switzerland was a pioneer, and an initial solution of a problem always takes longer. Other nations do not have to contend with medieval feudalism and other past stages of European history, but we must not be astonished if the change from the old to the new does not come

from one day to the other. Democracy has to grow. It cannot just be introduced, particularly by outsiders. Unless the political form of a country is upheld by the thought of its people it has no stability. To run a democracy with an administrative body which in its heart is monarchistic, cannot bring good results. The brevity of the Weimar Republic[8] has demonstrated this.

But on the other hand a democracy can have no stability if its foundation does not lie in the religious thought of the country. Like the ancient Athenian democracy, France under the Third Republic was a house divided against itself. Modern democracy needs the Bible to support its underlying concept - man as the image and likeness of God. It requires an understanding of the equality of the rights of men and this concept derives from the Bible. Persecution of those Frenchmen who had this basis of thought - the Huguenots - has done France an irreparable damage. It is a very different matter whether in a democratic state one man opposes another as one egoist contends with another or whether he respects in him something higher than a merely material man. John Locke, who had indirectly such an enormous influence on the French period of Enlightenment, himself built on this spiritual dignity of man, but his French interpreters with their Catholic background could not understand these deeper motives in Locke's thought because they had not his

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8. Braun, WZH.

familiarity with the Bible. Only the surface of his meaning was translated into French thought and therefore French democracy could be only superficial. The extreme centralization of French administration and its inefficient bureaucracy were remnants of the former monarchy and today it is evident to the world that French monarchists are still actively at work. On the other hand there was nothing to bind the extreme French individualism together into one common form. There was no common religious basis for democracy. The Roman Catholic Church teaches a hierarchical political system, and for her support of a democratic system is a compromise. The Church with which a great part of the nation was at war could not possibly provide the metaphysical basis for the political life of the nation. Therefore a democracy which meant only self-preservation on a material level, a refusal to die or live under barbaric conditions was the only ideal which could be upheld by the French Republic. In the tragic days of May and June 1940 the same fate that befell France was expected for England. England was hot invaded and it became clear to many that British democracy was upheld by something which France did not have, or had in insufficient degree - the moral strength which the Bible is capable of giving.

It is not the intention of this writer to emphasize arbitrarily a religious background of democracy, or to try to prove something which cannot be proved. The preservation

of Great Britain and Switzerland can as little be proved as could Anselm of Canterbury prove convincingly the existence of God. But philosophy has the right to point out relations and speculations which the scientist can only follow with the utmost reserve. It is the conviction of this writer that politics cannot be separated from religion. Democracy is the form of government which follows naturally from the teachings of the Bible, and unless its metaphysical basis is intact the conviction necessary for the defense of the cause of democracy is lacking.

This view may be opposed by the cross question: what about the Swiss Catholics? The Swiss Catholics are in the minority. They enjoy their full rights as citizens; they have therefore to believe what they deem right to believe, and their faith is not under attack. They enjoy the political system on which the Reformation has had so great an influence, while in France the Protestants under the persecutions of Louis XIV were reduced to such a small minority that their effect on the French state and economy could not be very great. A Catholic who has to work side by side with Protestants will never be as conservative as a Spanish monk. In Great Britain as in Switzerland there are people who as individuals would not have stood what the whole nation has undergone.

If we say that politics must be supported by religion, it does not follow that each citizen is living up to the ideal of a saint, but it does mean that the religious basis

exists and is upheld by enough people to be of general effect.

A further important point is that the less energy is needed for internal struggles, the more energy is free for constructive work. The more a political system approaches the perfect ideal the less motion is wasted in futile actions. One outstanding trait of character we could give to an imaginary average type of Swiss would be moderation in design and action. This is largely due to the fact that the Swiss can afford to be moderate, being a member of a political structure which through many centuries had the opportunity to file down its edges. In comparing newly established democracies with Switzerland this point should have consideration.

It happens, too, that prudencia seems to be a Swiss characteristic. Even if today a large part of the population are city dwellers, the figures of many of these people still show a rural touch and their mentality is peasant-like. In general the Swiss are very conservative and prudent. This has its good side, but it can also be a disguise for pettiness and fear of risks. This is certainly not the case with a good number of the business people, financiers and industrialists who have built up firms of international scope and fame and are in contact with the whole world. But beside them there is a large part of the population which knows little else but the life in their small country. The smallness of Switzerland has had the advantage of making possible a federal system uniting heterogeneous elements on a small scale, but

the country's size has the disadvantage of creating a provincial mentality, in particular if almost all possibilities for contact with the world at large are barred, as at present. Conscious of the insignificant size of his country, the Swiss may easily overlook its importance as a living example of a type of democracy which promises to be the pattern of an international federation.

Nevertheless all western nations have their outstanding citizens as well as a large average citizenry, and whatever may be criticized about the Swiss citizen on the average, its standard as well as education is on a high level. The gratitude for having escaped Nazi occupation is deep and finds its expression in helping to combat the hardships of the war-stricken peoples, be it by giving refuge to refugees or through the enormous organization of the International Red Cross Committee, or other channels.

The achievements of Swiss democracy are the result of tireless steady work. It not only made out of a poor mountain country one of the world's richest countries; it gave it an even and solid structure socially and politically. However, what is most important of all considerations is that a country with a spiritual basis such as Switzerland has, is not only more solid than many a country with good material prerequisites, but furnishes the basis for the coming world government.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

We have in the previous chapters tried to expound as objectively as possible the main lines of the political program which Plato describes in his Republic as well as the political system of the Swiss Confederation and it remains now to draw a comparison of the two.

We have characterized the Republic in the Introduction as "one of the earliest textbooks on government which is still widely read and studied and whose application to modern life is still considered". Our study is therefore not only the comparison of a governmental plan of antiquity with a modern state, but it is also a comparison between theory and practice. How does Plato's theoretic state compare with what we may consider today's most advanced living political structure? What have the two in common and in what do they differ?

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Plato finds his ideal solution of the governmental problem through an investigation of the essence of justice. While from an ethical point of view Plato considers the virtue of justice the perfect balance of the virtues of wisdom, courage and temperance, in matters of politics his justice becomes a

perfect equilibrium of all factors of social and political life. Justice exists if each citizen minds his own profession and social obligations without interfering with what is the concern of others. And in order to secure this state of equilibrium Plato wants to introduce a government by people who have full understanding of the function of this equilibrium and are able to perpetuate it.

In our treatise on Swiss democracy, too, we have laid great stress on the problem of equilibrium. We have been concerned with a right balance between centralism and federalism, between Protestants and Catholics, between the linguistic groups, balance of party interest, balance in the administrative body and in a more detailed study the list could be extended still further. We have given due consideration not only to the balance between centralism and federalism, but also to its relation to different periods. The study of Swiss history no doubt does much to confirm Plato's justification for considering justice in its connotation of equilibrium or balance as the basic criterion of political theory. On this point Switzerland - the practice - confirms the Republic - the theory.

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A further basic point in the Republic is the relation of metaphysics to politics. In the tenth book of the Republic Plato symbolizes the moving powers of the universe by eight

whorls , revolving in perfect harmony with each other. Justice, which in the Platonic sense stands for equilibrum, balance or harmony, is to be understood as more than a constitutive idea. It is the essence of the motive power of the universe itself. It is therefore quite clear that good government can only be the direction of a political structure in accordance with the nature of the metaphysical universe. The metaphysical universe, however, is beyond the comprehension of a human mind. It is the sphere where mere ratio cannot progress any further without begging the question. Only the assurance of the unity of religious faith and aesthetic feeling marches on into the realm of metaphysics, the realm of relative certainty, but the realm where the soul feels at ease. The philosopher who is capable of this metaphysical insight should find his normal activity in the application of his metaphysical understanding to human affairs. A large part of the Republic is devoted to methods for full development of the best elements of human society, with the final purpose of enabling the best among them to grant their comrades the ideal government which brings metaphysical harmony into the experience of all men.

In the treatment of Swiss evolution we have put great stress on the religious character of Swiss democracy. But here it is not an elaborate concept of metaphysics guiding the action of the people. Rather is it an earnest, child-like, yet common sense faith in God, as revealed in the doctrine

of Christianity. It is the sincere belief in the righteousness of taking up arms against injustice and arbitrary oppression. We characterized the Swiss urge for freedom as freedom to act according to conscience, and in the thirteenth century this meant the defense of what a sober man with common sense considered as right against the social order of the period.

We may question the adequacy of conscience as a guide for our actions. But uneducated people often have a perfect feeling of what is right without being able to explain coherently the reason for that feeling. Even today it is quite possible to be a good Swiss patriot, capable of judgment in important political matters, without being articulately clear concerning the Swiss concept of freedom and other phenomena of typical Swiss thought. While Plato's Republic presents a most perfect rational system, Swiss democracy has no such system. If a rationalist were to cross-question a Swiss about all a rationalist deems requisite for a political structure, the result might be disappointing. And in spite of this, Switzerland lives. It lives although material prerequisites may seem unsatisfactory. What is the answer?

Paul writes to the Corinthians[1]: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not

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1. I Cor. 1, 20-21.

God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In studying Swiss history , as well as the history of Great Britain and the United States and other countries, we get the impression that where the mentality is devoted to a religious ideal, something higher than human reason guides the nation. In the history of Switzerland as well as of Great Britain and the United States there have been episodes in which destruction of the country seemed much more probable than its survival, yet it did survive. One of the outstanding historical events of world history where religious high-mindedness has saved a desperate situation is the salvation of France through Joan of Arc. Objective study of history shows us many events on which consecrated religious thought had an effect, and it is therefore not beyond reason to consider such habitual religious thought capable of emancipating an entire country, even if the material prerequisites are unfavorable.

The mentality which created the Swiss Confederation is idealistic in so far as it is based on religious reverence, but it is also realistic in being concrete and matter-of-fact. Swiss mentality is at the same time idealistic and practical. It is concerned with putting into practice what is considered right, and in doing so nothing must interfere. This is the Swiss sense of freedom. It is a freedom to do things according to a sense of right and not a freedom from obligation.

While Swiss democracy coincides with Plato in stressing equilibrium and in the necessity for religious guidance, the character of this guidance is different. However it would have been impossible for Plato to advocate what Switzerland has put into practice. It was chronologically impossible for him to know about the hidden fruits of Christianity.

The Christian belief in divine guidance is exemplified by the journey of the Israelites through the desert, following the lead of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.[2] Plato's religious guidance was understanding of the principle of the universe and a shaping of the material experience according to the understanding of this principle. While the Christian concept of guidance expects God to take care of all human needs, the Platonic concept depends on the intelligence of a highly perfected man, a kind of superman. In such a rationalistic concept the physical must adjust itself to the principles of the metaphysical universe, and no material sacrifice necessary to bring the physical under rational control is considered too great. The guardians have to renounce their natural desires for a family of their own. Art and cultural life must submit to censorship. A city with primitive living conditions seems preferable to a full unfoldment of human qualities, as is possible in a cultured milieu. In other words, the fullness of man's spiritual unfoldment has to be reduced to the point where a rational

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2. Exodus 13, 21.

government after the design of the Republic is easily possible; the fullness of life has to be cut to the measure required for control of the human mind.

It is against this reduction of life that the modern reader of the Republic rebels. It is against human feelings that man's energies should be kept at a low degree, and where man meets obstruction he will either fight against it or if he submits to it he is unhappy.

However, the Republic is more than a theory to be upheld or dismissed. It is the most perfect expression of the rationalistic control of life which in every individual is an integral part of his thinking. We want to control our action by our reason. Our senses cannot perceive a substance which is not material. The objects of the physical senses are the factors of such rationalistic thinking and even if we believe in a metaphysical universe, the incapacity to measure the metaphysical by familiar physical measurements appears to make it necessary to adjust the metaphysical to the physical. The difference between Plato and an average individual is, that Plato with his synoptic capacity develops this kind of rational thinking into a whole system, whereas the thinking of less outstanding persons is sketchy and concerned only with particular problems. We cannot blame Plato for having failed to come to a smooth solution of the problem where his rational system clashes with natural institutions

such as the family. We should rather be grateful to him that he has developed this rational viewpoint consistently enough to bring out its weaknesses. It would be foolish to think that Plato did not himself see the difficulties of his program. The caution with which the Platonic Socrates sets forth the plan makes it obvious that this was the case, and we should not overlook the fact that the Republic is not Plato's only treatise on government. If the Republic had entirely satisfied him, he would not have felt the urge to try out other methods in his search for an entirely satisfactory governmental system on a rational basis.

However, this was something beyond the possibilities of Plato's sphere of thought. Plato went as far as thought can go without accepting the Gospel of Christ as revelation. He went beyond a mere empirical approach of philosophy in accepting the reality of a metaphysical universe. But what was the evidence of correctness for such an assumption? It is but a sublime feeling and the lack of a unifying principle of the universe in the sensate which justifies such a step, and we can heartily sympathize with Aristotle if in this point he could not follow his master. Scientific, conscientious thinking which bases its system on the empirical cannot proceed into the realm of belief. Was not the Platonic concept of God a mere sublimation of the human mind, a wishful belief because synoptical thinking must believe that an unlimited

mind is governing the universe?

Greek thinking deserves our deep respect for having developed thinking on a material basis up to its very limits. But we can also see that until something entirely new appeared in the realm of thought, there was no possibility for further progress. Ancient philosophy had reached its peak in Plato's central problems and it was at that point that the Gospel of Christ was needed for further evolution.

While the teachings of Jesus in their letter were adopted formally in a comparatively short time, the actual assimilation up to the present time should not be overrated. For the ancient time, however, the adoption of the Jewish-Christian concept of God was of great importance. While Greek thinking, in trying to reach general inferences from particular empiric experience, was in its nature inductive, the Christian doctrine taught deduction from its monotheistic concept of God. But in order to accept this concept of God, belief in the revelation of the Christian doctrine is necessary. For non-believers, of course, this is only an illegitimate mysticism and no solution at all. For the devoted Christian it is a deep experience and a source of moral strength. Religious experience through the acceptance of Christianity promised to give the assurance of a metaphysical universe which with Plato could only be speculation. It was therefore natural that a unification of Christianity and Platonism took place, and if for the earlier stage of development of the Christian

Church Aristotle became more important than Plato, this does not change the basic trend. Aristotle, the pupil, had not followed his master into his metaphysical mysticism and he therefore had no concept of God which could conflict with the Christian concept. Also, the encyclopedic structure of his philosophy was more suitable for adoption as a canonical code.

From the thirteenth century on this Christian-Aristotelian system was challenged from all sides. The empiricists saw its contradiction to the empiric world. The religious desire of the people was not met and they sought solutions outside the official Church. In a similar way its political system was challenged. We have discussed the hierarchical system of the Church and its secular expression in feudalism. We have studied Swiss history as an expression of emancipation under a new constitutive idea. The time had come when Greek rationalism with all its by-products was pushed into the background and a more complete predominance was given to the teachings of Christ. The canonical teachings of the Church were more and more abandoned and the Bible became the textbook of life and action. Even if the understanding of man as the image and likeness of God so far has been dim, it has had the power to postulate as a general political principle the equal rights of men.

But what does this mean practically? Does it open the way to the kind of democracy described by Plato? This cannot be. If we honor in each individual a spiritual entity - and

on this spiritual concept of man the Christian democracy is built - this does not mean that from an empirical point of view the equal capacity of all men is apparent. The empirical aspect of man shows differences in quality and in setting up a political order even in a democracy we cannot dispense completely with a hierarchical order. We need the services of the most capable people in the most important offices.

Accepting a hierarchical system within the modern democracy, we may be challenged with the conclusion that actually the good old system, which Plato inaugurated, has not been discarded. The basic characteristic of modern democracy as seen in Switzerland is that the whole political structure is the consequence of the desire for religious freedom or freedom of conscience. Nothing must interfere with this freedom and for its sake any risk or cost is assumed. The individual man is the unit of the social contract called Eidgenossenschaft - cooperation by oath. The individual sacrifices a part of his independence to the cooperative unit which in turn is supposed to act for each individual. But the oath on which this cooperative undertaking rests points to the responsibility which is felt towards a higher power, and all political and administrative affairs are ordered in reverence to this higher power. However, the state is not an institution which can draw the reverence of the people in a direction foreign to religious devotion, as has been the

case in Germany. The Swiss state is subordinate to the Christian religious concepts of the country. The state is the guarantor of religious freedom,- the servant and not the rival of religion. The state represents a human justice watching over the security of social life. The ideal, however, is divine justice, the absolute justice, which mankind is not yet ready to follow in its entirety. Fully acknowledging the imperfections of human justice, this justice has nevertheless to be maintained in order to meet the physical needs of the country, and its administration necessarily brings a hierarchical system in which the best men of the country should be in the most important positions. But the way of a democratic perfectionism is not sought merely in a perfecting of this hierarchical political system. The main emphasis is put on the better expression and practice of the divine justice and when progress in this direction has been made, an outmoded system of human justice may be replaced by a more advanced one. Such a democracy is like a growing crayfish, changing its armor several times. The animal grows but not the armor. Whenever an armor becomes too small, the animal bursts it and a new armor grows. The goal of such a Christian democracy is the full realization of divine justice, and as far as this divine justice is understood it is applied. Insofar as it is too high to be applied in political life, an inferior human justice has to be followed and its order must be built on a human concept of man, which makes a

hierarchical system necessary.[3]

This shows that even for the Christian democracy Plato's plan should not be ignored. It teaches the fundamentals of government even today. It illustrates the basic political problems and is far superior to the sketchy treatments of many modern authors. In a time when the fundamentals of government are challenged, we have to go back in our studies to the principles, and one of the most valuable expositions of the principles of government is the Republic.

The comparison of Swiss democracy with the Republic has shown us that there is agreement not only on the question of political balance, but that both systems point to the interrelation of religion or metaphysics and politics. We mentioned in the Introduction, however, that if a philosophic belief is replaced by a religious belief, not much is gained. If we regard metaphysics or divine justice as the determining factor in matters of politics, the problems of metaphysics become of supreme importance. Ultra-materialistic totalitarianism is attacking all belief in metaphysics. What gives the soldiers on the side of democracy the conviction that they are fighting on the right side? In a battle for life and death is a belief sufficient? Aggressive attacks on the existence of democracy force the defenders to seek for the scientific nature of the Christian religion, as paradoxical as this may sound in the ears of defenders of traditional theology. To look back on a glorious past does not give the

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3. Zwingli, gmG.

force to live. An understanding of the principle on which religious democracy is based alone gives the power to resist its attackers under the most adverse conditions.

We have further pointed out in the Introduction that the democratic way of solving political problems is not to shun the hard way of establishing equilibrium by enforcing peace without really solving the problem. We spoke of two ways of making order, one by doing the necessary washing, the other, by hiding the dirty objects. Coercion was tried in Switzerland before the French Revolution and the consequence was the French invasion, which introduced the darkest period of Swiss history. Coercion has been used in the totalitarian countries and political thinkers agree that settlement of the problems of these countries will be extremely difficult. Yet, democracy is not a political structure which can be introduced ad libitum. This was attempted in 1919 and none of those new democracies of Europe is still in existence. Real democracy has to grow. The democratic spirit has to be established in the thought of a people. This does not mean that every democracy needs 700 years to grow to solidity as was the case for the pioneering democracy of the modern type, but it is hardly possible just after a war to find a solid democratic basis for a country unaccustomed to democracy. The way will have to be paved with transitional solutions until the worst wounds of the war are healed and emotion is calmed.

In looking forward to a world union we take in perspective an ultimate aim, but it is unrealistic to think that an international government can be introduced from one day to another. The League of Nations was an indispensable step towards this goal and we do not help to construct peace by cursing this initial and partly unsuccessful step. There is no doubt that the time has come when an international political balance can be maintained only by world centralization of some governmental functions in order to find a remedy for international anarchy. But such a move will become possible only by first settling an enormous number of lesser problems. This is what we mean by making order in the right way. A conclusion at the conference table has no power if it does not coincide with realities. Equilibrium and not a powerful sentence determines the issue.

The problems of Germany should not be brushed aside indiscriminately. Germany's problem is vital for the whole world. It is only her solution we cannot accept. Germany has tried to establish a complete centralism by abolishing all particularism. We see this is no solution. While modern economics require the greatest possible centralization, culture depends on the individual, and therefore individualism must be preserved. Switzerland is the antipode of German centralization; it is a balance between the two

elements. Germany under the Nazi regime cannot endure, while the Swiss Confederation and her big sister republic, the United States, indicate the possible solution of the world-wide political problem. It is a balance of centralistic and particularistic interests and in both countries the religious life based on the Bible has been of great importance.

We have compared the evolution in democratic perfectionism to the growth of a crayfish changing its armor several times until it reaches its full growth. We have examined the conditions in Swiss history at the time of the foundation of the Confederation with its emphasis on federalism. We have considered the same problem in the fifteenth century and in the nineteenth. The constitutive idea of the Swiss Confederation has remained the same, though her governmental form has changed. Having been based on the idea of the country and not on material prerequisites, this structure could change in accordance with the needs of the times and if Switzerland can stand the present siege, we can well imagine that she will have an important role in the evolution towards a world federation. Switzerland is not only a museum piece of federal and democratic government. It is a living organism, a practical demonstration of a political cooperative <u>society</u> which does justice to the particular as well as to the whole.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Our comparison of Plato's Republic and Swiss Democracy has given us the opportunity on one hand to challenge Plato's plan of a political structure with a conception of modern democracy, and on the other hand confronting such a conception of modern democracy with Plato's theoretical scheme has provided the means for a scrutinizing examination of a standpoint which the defender of Western culture regards as the only acceptable standpoint. To simplify the comparison we have avoided comparing Plato's philosophy as a whole with modern democracy as a whole. We have selected as representative of each standpoint what we considered its most distinct example - in one case the Republic, in the other the Swiss Confederation. This selection has also been made because of the writer's particular acquaintance with Swiss conditions.

The comparison of Plato's Republic and Swiss democracy cannot conclude with a simple separation of the sheep from the goats. Plato's proposal of an organicistic-individualistic structure of political society cannot simply be discarded by modern democracy as either an utopian scheme or an out-of-date political plan. Plato's metaphysics cannot be put aside as a system having no bearing on the problems of our days. On

the other hand, a democratic order like that of Switzerland seems, in the light of Plato's philosophy, to be a living organism whose existence can hardly be justified. It is like confronting an uneducated man, having only his religious faith and common sense to guide him, with an outstanding intellectual and sage. Can this man hold anything against the careful plan of the sage? Have the two a common basis? Does the common man need the help of the sage for building up his society? Does the common man have something, which the sage does not have? Let us make the final comparison of Plato's Republic with Swiss democracy in this light.

1. Plato makes the virtue of justice the constitutive idea of his Republic. Justice in his conception is the co-ordination of all virtues and as such means balance or equilibrium, not only in ethics, but in all phases of life. We have pointed out in the chapters on Switzerland that one of the most important reasons for the evolution of that country has been the preservation of balance in its structure. This balance has been shown to be important in the relation between centralism and particularism, the denominational bodies, the linguistic groups, in administration, etc. Plato's concept of justice therefore is also applicable for the organism of Swiss democracy.

2. Plato emphasizes the close relationship of metaphysics to politics. His politics is the application of knowledge of metaphysical truth to the affairs of society. Because only

the philosopher is concerned with knowledge of the metaphysical universe, the governmental direction should be in the hands of the philosopher. This leads him to a hierarchical structure of society with three estates, the philosophers and executives, the lower ranks of the administration who are at the same time warriors, and the common people who have no governmental duties at all. Plato gives much attention to the education of the responsible leaders, on whose perfect functioning the welfare of his political society depends. This system has been characterized here as hierarchical perfectionism.

We have shown the vital importance of the close relation between a living religiosity based on the Bible and the political evolution of Switzerland. We have characterized the Swiss concept of freedom as a freedom to act according to conscience. The Swiss experience therefore affirms Plato's view of a close relationship between metaphysics or religion and politics.

3. Swiss democracy differs from Plato's ideal society in making politics dependent on a concept of God as revealed by the Bible, and the individual member of this democracy feels himself responsible for his actions to a higher power. This gives Swiss democracy a theocratic character and distinguishes it from an irreligious democracy. Making politics dependent on a metaphysical power and endeavoring to establish in action as far as possible the will of God, makes it possible to

subordinate the matters of the state to divine authority (Rom. 13, 1). The laws of the state are recognized as emergency measures needed as long as man is not able to do justice to the divine law, but it does not permit the political law to interfere with the divine law. With the growing maturity of the members of the society the political laws can be amended and the political legislative can infinitely approach the constitutive divine or absolute law. We have characterized this as democratic perfectionism.

The main difference between Plato's standpoint and the Swiss-democratic standpoint is that Plato makes the interpretation of the divine law dependent on a highly skilled and perfected human individual, while Swiss democracy respects each individual as the image and likeness of God and gives to each his share in the maintenance of the political structure. This does not exclude the necessity of commissioning capable individuals for executive duties, and as far as the administration and defense of a country are concerned Plato's Republic is still a valuable textbook. In building up an administrative body or an armed force we cannot avoid building up a hierarchical structure, and authority for this hierarchy must be provided by law. However the people reserves its veto (referendum and initiative) and hereby prevents the hierarchical body from doing violation to the fundamental principles of democracy.

4. The justification for making a political structure dependent on metaphysics can be questioned. The fact, however, that the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Swiss Confederation and other modern and mainly Protestant democracies are solid structures makes one cautious in refuting the basis on which these structures are built. This points to the importance of research in the philosophy of religion as a background of politics.

5. With regard to a reconstructed political order after this war, the Swiss Confederation as a laboratory of democracy shows that the evolution and consolidation of a democratic system must grow from within. Peace conferences can facilitate such growth by removing obstacles, but no democracy can flourish unless it is based on the will of the majority of the people and its capacity to maintain such a democratic order.

With regard to a world federation, the Swiss Confederation represents one of the examples of smaller states successfully united in one nation, and she furnishes a proof that difference of language, culture, race, and religious faith are not insurmountable obstacles to uniting under a central government without giving up local individuality. At a time when world-wide systems of administration are studied both by responsible governments and private individuals, a study of the complicated Swiss conditions and their satisfactory solution is of practical value.

APPENDIX

Bundesbrief of 1291.

(Translation from the original Latin text)

In The Name of God, Amen. 1. Honor and public welfare are enhanced when agreements are entered into for the proper establishment of quiet and peace. Therefore, know all men, that the people of the Valley of Uri, the community of the Valley of Schwæytz and the community of mountaineers of the Lower Valley[1], in view of the evil of the time, in order that they may better defend themselves and their own, have promised in good faith to assist each other, with aid, counsel and every favor, with person and goods, within the valleys and without, with all power and endeavor against all and every who may inflict upon any one of them any violence, molestation or injury, or may plot evil to their persons or goods. 2. And in every event, each people has promised to hasten to the aid of the other whenever necessary, and at their own expense, so far as needed, in order to resist attacks of evildoers and to avenge injuries. To which end they have taken oath in person to do this without deceit, and to renew by means of the present (agreement) the ancient oath-confirmed confederation.[2] 3. Yet in such a manner that every man, according to his rank, shall continue to yield proper obedience to his overlord.

4. By common agreement and by unanimous consent, we promise, enact and ordain that in the aforesaid valleys, we will in no wise receive or accept any judge who has obtained his office for a price, or for money in any way whatever, nor one who is not a native or resident with us.

5. If dissension shall arise between any of the confederates, prudent men of the confederation shall come together to settle the dispute between the parties as shall seem right to them, and the party which rejects their judgment shall be an enemy to the other confederates.

6. Furthermore, it is established between them that whoever maliciously kills another without provocation shall lose his life, if captured, as his nefarious crime demands,

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1. Underwalden, lower valley = Nidwalden.

2. While so far the third person has been used, under 4 it is the first person. This points to the probability that the parts using the first person are amendments of 1291 to an earlier document which is lost. The amendments are in italics.

unless he can show his own innocence in the affair; and if he escapes, he shall never return. Concealers and defenders of the aforesaid malifactors shall be banished from the valleys, until they are expressly called back by the confederates. 7. If any one of the confederates, by day, or in the silence of the night, maliciously attempts to injure another by fire, he shall never be held a compatriot. 8. If any one protects or defends the afore-said evildoer, he shall render satisfaction to the person injured. 9. Further, if any one of the confederates robs another of his goods, or injures him in any way, the goods of the evildoer, if found within the valleys, shall be seized in order that satisfaction may be given to the party damaged, according to justice. 10. Furthermore, no one shall seize another's goods for debt, unless he be manifestly his debtor or surety, and this shall only take place with the special permission of his judge. Moreover, every man shall obey his judge - and if necessary, himself ought to indicate the judge within (the valley) before whom he ought properly to appear. 11. And if any one rebels against a verdict, and if in consequence of this pertinacity any one of the confederates is injured, the whole body of confederates are bound to compel the contumacious party to give satisfaction.

12. If war or discord shall arise among any of the confederates, and one contending party refuses to accept proffered justice or satisfaction, the confederates are bound to assist the other party.

13. The regulations above written, established for the common utility and welfare, shall, the Lord willing, endure forever. In testimony of which, at the request of the aforesaid parties, the present instrument has been made and confirmed with the seals of the three democracies and valleys aforesaid.

Done in the year of the Lord M.CC.L.XXXX primo. at the beginning of the month of August.

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